the weekly
Standard

JANUARY 24, 2000

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Contents

January 24, 2000 • Volume 5, Number 18

2 Scrapbook . . . *Andrew Cuomo, Pat Buchanan, and more.*

4 Casual . . . . . *Jonathan V. Mitty.*

6 Correspondence . . . . . *On Churchill, HUD, etc.*

7 Editorial . . . *Depends on What the Meaning of Flip-Flop Is*

Articles

9 Steve Forbes, Mr. Nice Guy *Everyone thought he would start attacking Bush sooner. Why didn't he?* . . BY FRED BARNES

10 The McCain-Bush Tax Wars *It's either the end of McCain or the end of an era.* . . . . . BY DAVID BROOKS

13 The Democrats' Marathon *Why Gore vs. Bradley could last until the convention.* . . . . . BY MATTHEW REES

15 Keyes to the Presidency? *If talking were all it took, Alan Keyes would be in the White House.* . . . . . BY TUCKER CARLSON

17 Pandering to the Middle Class *The four flaws in John McCain's four-point economic plan.* . . . . . BY DAVID FRUM

Cover illustration: Thomas Fluharty

Features

19 Completing the War on Crime

The crime rate has been reduced, but it's still too high. . . . . . BY ANDREW PEYTON THOMAS

22 TV as a Religion-Free Zone

The FCC thinks the problem with television is too much religion. . . . . . BY JUSTIN TORRES

Books & Arts

25 Lonely Eagle *Charles Lindbergh, his family, and his times.* . . . . . BY NOEMIE EMERY

31 Sometimes a Magazine is Just a Magazine *Renata Adler's memoir of the old* New Yorker. . . BY ANDREW FERGUSON

32 Rock-A-Bye Stalin *Communism stages a comeback in Hollywood.* . . . . . BY JOHN PODHORETZ

36 Not a Parody . . . . . *A letter to the editor of the* New York Times.

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the weekly Standard

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Back to New York for Andrew Cuomo

Andrew Cuomo, the secretary of housing and urban development, has been a busy man recently. In just the past six weeks, he's threatened to sue the gun industry, thundered against Fannie Mae for refusing to knuckle under to his demands for privileged information, and seized $60 million in New York City housing funds that would otherwise have been doled out by Mayor Rudy Giuliani (i.e., Hillary Clinton's opponent).

Congressional Republicans are crying foul over Cuomo's insertion of HUD into the New York Senate race, but it doesn't look like he'll be around to answer their questions. THE SCRAPBOOK has learned that Cuomo will be leaving HUD no later than May, having told his closest associates he plans to return to his native New York. He's been less explicit about his exact plans, but they're not hard to figure out: get Al Gore elected president (Cuomo was spinning reporters at the January 5 debate in Durham, New Hampshire), get Hillary Clinton elected senator, and get himself elected governor in 2002.

It's too bad Cuomo won't be interrogated on the Hill, particularly when it comes to explaining why he seized the $60 million. The facts of the case are as follows: On December 21, Cuomo announced at a New York State Assembly hearing that HUD would take control of the homeless program, charging the Giuliani administration with having "politicized" the way the program's grants were being awarded. Moments after the hearing ended, Cuomo assured reporters there was nothing political in his action, but that, yes, "Hillary Rodham Clinton is going to be the next senator from New York." Later in the day, Cuomo's wife, Kerry Kennedy Cuomo, spoke at a Democratic party fund-raiser in New York and cheered her husband's move against Giuliani. As if that's not enough, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager was, until recently, a regional HUD director in New York, reporting to Cuomo. And even Cuomo's own general counsel at HUD can't offer a forthright defense of the action, saying only that it "may be legally defensible." Even the *New York Times* has tagged Cuomo's move "an abrupt and extreme step," adding that Giuliani was "within his rights to see politics behind Mr. Cuomo's action."

Once Cuomo moves off the government payroll, will the Clinton and Gore campaigns give him his back pay? ♦

In the Crosshairs

It looks like CNN won't be keeping Pat Buchanan's *Crossfire* chair warm for him.

Here's Beth Fouhy, one of CNN's top producers, being interviewed last month by Tammy Haddad on a show called *The First Producer's Club*, on America's Voice cable channel:

FOUHY: "We love Pat Buchanan—there does get to a point, though, where probably he looks a little silly and we look a little silly with this back and forth quality; he's either a candidate or he works for CNN . . . as a commentator. I do think that it confuses CNN's audience to see him hosting a show and then the next day, being the subject of news coverage as a candidate. . . . I think it's gotten to the point where Pat doesn't really want to come back and it probably wouldn't feel appropriate to anybody."

HADDAD: "So, you don't think it's appropriate for CNN to bring him back?"

FOUHY: "At this point, I'm prepared to say it would be inappropriate." ♦

No Stereotypes, Please, We're Republicans

It's no secret that the Republican party has made "outreach" to minorities a priority. Last May, we reported on the Republican National Committee's Cinco de Mayo celebration, which included the hiring of three sombrero-wearing *guitarristas* to serenade partygoers in front of the party's Washington headquarters on Capitol Hill. Now the effort is being expanded. At last week's RNC meeting in San Jose, the party brought together 14 working-class Hispanics for an hour-long focus group to discuss a Dick Armey health-care proposal. As RNC chief of staff Tom Cole explained: "If we can get past stereotypes and get to issues that matter to people, party doesn't really matter much." The RNC provided the usual focus-group inducements to the participants—$50 and dinner. Oh, and in the getting-past-stereotypes department, the party chieftains provided one other thing: a mariachi band. ♦

Of Frogs and Men

If you thought Major League Baseball overreacted when it sentenced John Rocker to the therapist's couch for bigotry, consider the treatment meted out to Vaclav Prospal, a forward for the Ottawa Senators, by the National Hockey League. During a game against the Montreal Canadiens in December, Prospal called Canadi-

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LIFE IN NASDAQISTAN

ens defenseman Patrice Brisebois—gird yourself, Delicate Reader—a "frog." Brisebois whined to the press about it. Now the NHL has forced Prospal to take a series of "diversity classes" as punishment for his insensitivity.

"Talk about my stickhandling, my defense, my checking, my skating," says NHL diversity consultant Zack Minor. "I cross the line when I get into the personal attack, my culture, my race, my sexual preference, my personal failures." Of course beating Brisebois bloody would only have cost Prospal five minutes in the penalty box. ♦

The Xiong Show

A unique opportunity will arise next week for Congress to resolve some controversies involving Chinese military intelligence. General Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of the general staff for the Chinese army, is coming to town Jan. 24 to meet with Pentagon officials. Xiong has been intimately involved in China's dealings with the Clinton administration, ranging from the illegal financing of the Democratic National Committee to the theft of nuclear secrets from America's laboratories.

Here are some of the issues about which Xiong could be questioned: According to sworn testimony given by Democratic fund-raiser Johnny Chung, one of Xiong's subordinates told him that Beijing wanted the Clinton-Gore ticket reelected in 1996, and then gave Chung $300,000 to make it happen. Xiong may know what if any favors were done to deserve this support. Another of Xiong's subordinates told Chung not to worry about taking the money because the Chinese military was already pouring money into the DNC through other conduits. Xiong could potentially identify the other Chinese donors.

Macao criminal syndicate figure Ng Lapseng, a business partner of Chinese military intelligence, entered the United States carrying large bundles of cash, totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars. On nearly all of these visits, Ng met at the White House with Clinton fund-raiser Mark Middleton. Ng has since fled the country, and Middleton has taken the Fifth. Xiong may know where Ng's cash went. During his infamous visit to the Buddhist temple in southern California, Al Gore sat between Maria Hsia and Ted Sioeng, identified by the CIA as Chinese agents. Xiong could reveal what relationship Gore had with Hsia and Sioeng.

Either Congress or attorney general Janet Reno could greet Xiong with a subpoena when he arrives in Washington. Congress's interest is understandable, but Reno could benefit, too.

Says William Triplett II, co-author of the recently published *Red Dragon Rising*: "On her watch a potentially hostile power penetrated the American government at the highest level. Not only did she not stop it, at best she bungled the investigation of how it happened and why. History is not going to be kind." Calling Xiong before a federal grand jury would be a breach of protocol, of course. But Xiong is the man who once threatened to use nuclear weapons against Los Angeles. So it couldn't happen to a nicer guy. ♦

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Casual

Suit Me Up

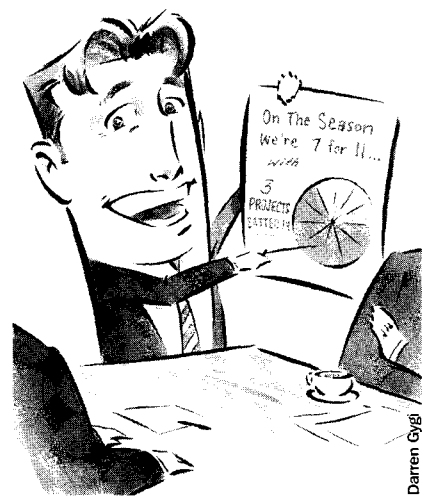
I struck out Frank Thomas the other day. He was sitting on an 0-2 count when I blew a 58 mile-per-hour rocket past him. A little something I like to call my high heater. He never had a chance.

It wasn't the real Big Hurt, of course, just a computer video simulation at the National Sports Gallery, an exhibit at the MCI Center in downtown Washington. But what a simulation! You stand on a mound, dig your foot in against the rubber, and throw a baseball at a life-size video image of a hitter. Then the computer decides—depending on the speed and placement of the ball and the hitter's particular proclivities—whether it's a ball, strike, or hit.

There are other sports simulations at the Gallery, too. You can take slapshots at an ice-hockey goalie, play Horse against a pro basketball player, and throw passes against a blitzing zone defense in a football simulator. I ran from one game to another, squealing like a 6-year-old. It has become clear to me that I want to be a professional athlete.

Most men have this fixation during their boyhoods, but not me. When I was little I had other dumb career aspirations: One week I wanted to be a fireman, the next week I wanted to be a senator. I spent years thinking I wanted to be a doctor. But why? Who wants to hose down fires or sit in committee or listen to people with the sniffles? Or write, for that matter? Truth: I would rather play AAA ball than be a senior editor of the *New Yorker*.

Even minor-league baseball players get the good life. They travel to exotic places, like Jacksonville and Toledo, and have groupies waiting for them at every stop. But it's more than just the groupies. They get a life that is clearly defined. They know that work is nine innings, 162 days a year. They know when they're successful and when they're not. When you're a ball player, you have tangible numbers to show for your work. You get to carry around a .300 batting average or a 2.20 ERA. Try getting that sort of satisfaction from office work: Hey Bob! I gave a great presentation at the team meeting; I'm 7 for 11 on the season with 3 projects batted in!



Darren Gygi

And the actions behind the numbers are even more satisfying. There is no purer joy in life than sport. Anyone who has ever tracked down a fly ball or spotted up for a three-pointer can attest to the unalloyed pleasure of doing these simple tasks well. But maybe more than anything else, the allure of sport lies in the thrill of working with great men.

The National Sports Gallery is full of memorabilia from legendary players. You can touch a bat used by Babe Ruth and admire the last pitched ball from Game 7 of the 1909 World Series where Honus Wagner's mighty Pittsburgh Pirates bested Ty Cobb's Detroit Tigers. A small room houses a collection of baseballs signed by some of the game's titans. There's one from a Roger Maras of the Fargo-Moorhead Twins (he changed the spelling of his last name when he made the bigs). There's one from Mickey Mantle that reads "My First H.R. in the MAJORS / May 1, 1951 / 450 FEET / Chicago." Another has the scraggly printed signature of Shoeless Joe Jackson. These were big, heroic men doing big, heroic things. They're Donald Kagan's boys.

Today's athletes have been demythologized. You think of baseball players and you picture a coked-up Darryl Strawberry, basketball conjures images of thugs like Latrell Sprewell, and football triggers the murderous Rae Carruth. The movie *Any Given Sunday* shows the world of pro football to be an orgy of screaming sex and violence, filled with late-night parties and locker-room wars. But for all of these outliers, I suspect the day-to-day life of most athletes is much more staid. Workouts, practices, and travel schedules are rigorous. Most athletes spend hours doing homework by watching tapes and studying the game, and besides, many of them have families to get home to. To them, the game is solid, extremely well-paid, blue-collar work. Sure, the Mantles and DiMaggios of the world may be gone, but the sports universe is still full of guys like Jordan and Jeter, Manning and Gretzky. It's still a good time to be a jock.

The only thing keeping me out of the pros is the fact that I've never been much of an athlete. I had the misfortune of being a mediocre talent in a number of different sports—I fell in love with lots of games and excelled at none of them. Meanwhile, the few people I knew who eventually made it to the pros were fine athletes and generally nice, but they lacked my sophisticated and heartfelt appreciation of sports. They didn't have, as we say, the love.

For now I'm stuck with the National Sports Gallery and Cyber Hurt, but if there's any call out there for a slow, undersized point guard or a low-velocity, right-handed pitcher without much curve on his curveball, give me a ring. I work cheap. I'll be on the next bus to Toledo.

Jonathan V. Last

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Our Finest Hour

In developing his argument for naming Winston Churchill the Man of the Century, David Frum writes: "The true candidates . . . are the men without whom history would have taken a radically different turn, either for better or worse" ("What Makes a Man of the Century," Jan. 3/Jan. 10). No disagreement here.

But he continues: "If one were putting together a list . . . for the 19th century, one would look at names like Austen, Beethoven, Goethe, Faraday, Darwin, Marx, Verdi, Monet, Nietzsche, and Rockefeller." None of these, it need hardly be added, was decisive to the 19th century in the way Churchill was to the 20th. So why name them? Because, according to Frum, the 19th century belonged "to the artists, thinkers, and businessmen"—by which one can only assume he means that it was marked by no supreme crisis in which one man made all the difference.

But this is not so. The American Civil War was just such a crisis. The fate of freedom hinged no less on its outcome than on the outcome of World War II. And one man provided the margin of victory—Abraham Lincoln. Eighty years before Churchill exhorted Britain to her finest hour, Lincoln did the same for America. He explained to Americans what was at stake, girded them up for the long, arduous task, and steered the ship of state to victory.

And, as with Churchill, Lincoln's crucial moment came at the beginning. At the outbreak of the war, when public opinion wavered and many thought that letting the South go peacefully was the best solution, Lincoln showed that doing so would spell the end of free government. As he explained in his First Inaugural Address, free government requires abiding by the votes you lose. The alternatives are anarchy and despotism.

Churchill and every other hero of the 20th century—great and small, famous and obscure—owe it to Abraham Lincoln that government of the people, by the people, for the people, did not perish in the 19th.

Michael Anton
New York, NY

I want to congratulate The Weekly Standard for its choice of Winston Churchill as the Man of the Century. For one who was sleeping on the floor of a school in the Pyrenees, running away from the Nazis after the start of the Vichy regime, listening on the radio to Winston Churchill was the only ray of hope of final victory and utter defeat of the murdering tyrant.

Jacques Torczyner
Walnut Creek, CA

While I commend The Weekly Standard for recognizing that Churchill was the Man of the Century, Christopher Matthews ("The Very Model of a Democratic Statesman," Jan. 3/Jan. 10) superficially and erroneously argues that Churchill was the "democratic ideal" who had confidence in the people. Churchill distinguished himself in many ways, but not in that regard.

Churchill was indeed a passionate democrat, but of a 19th-century variety that was aristocratic and paternalistic. For much of his life he believed that only some people should vote and leave the governing to Great Men. In 1930, during a time when democracy was embattled, Churchill wrote that universal suffrage actually undermined democracy: "Democracy has invaded the Council Chamber. It has liquidated the prestige of the House of Commons. . . . There is no guarantee that universal suffrage will understand, cherish, or even protect the venerable instrument to which it owes its birth." The masses were emotional and parochial, and particularly clueless in matters of war and peace. He blamed them for World War I and its length; already in 1901 he had predicted, "The wars of the people will be more terrible than the wars of the kings." He blamed them for the near-end of his career over the Dardanelles, writing in 1917, "Public opinion is unable to measure the true proportion of events." He blamed them in 1929 for the vengeful and destabilizing Versailles Treaty: "'The plain people' of whom he [Woodrow Wilson] spoke so much, though very resolute and persevering in war, knew nothing whatever about

AVE MARIA

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On the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, we are reminded of the need for law to support the culture of life. In *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)*, Pope John Paul II, quoting the Second Vatican Council, eloquently emphasized this need:

From the moment of its conception life must be guarded with the greatest care, while abortion and infanticide are unspeakable crimes.
–Evangelium Vitae, 62

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how to make a just and durable peace." And he was disgusted by the lack of public support for his campaign against the Bolsheviks in 1919, revealing his intention to persist "regardless of the unthinking opinion." Although he came to accept wider political participation, Churchill confided his delight that the Potsdam proceedings were barred from the press: "It is impossible to conduct grave affairs except in silence and secrecy."

While Matthews correctly notes that Churchill often candidly told the people of the wartime risks they faced, Churchill was equally comfortable deceiving them. For instance, in the winter of 1939-40, Finland gained the sympathy of the democratic world after it was attacked by Russia, and Churchill publicly extolled the "sublime" Finnish struggle. Privately, however, he initially sympathized with the Russians and then supported intervention to help the Finns, but only as a "cover" for interdicting vital Swedish iron ore shipments to Germany.

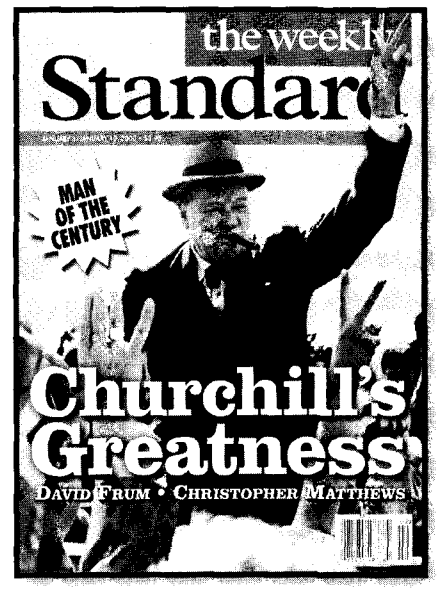
Instead of constructing artificial accolades, we should recognize Churchill for being the most vigilant, farsighted, and pivotal champion of freedom and a stable peace in a century marked by wars and political oppression. Churchill led the charge to strangle Bolshevism in its infancy in 1919-1920 (an effort Matthews oddly omits), warned against Versailles and Hitler from the beginning, girded himself in 1940 "to stand alone in the breach, and face the worst that the tyrant's might and enmity can do," warned against Russia at the end of World War II, and then tried (unsuccessfully) to stave off and then end the Cold War for the following decade. It is for all this that Churchill earns our respect as Man of the Century.

MICHAEL MAKOVSKY
Cambridge, MA

POPE JOHN PAUL II would have been a perfect complement to Winston Churchill as Men of the Century. As Churchill was the champion of human freedom, John Paul is the prophet and champion of free humanity. That is, Churchill led the fight to keep tyranny from destroying freedom; John Paul is not only a great champion of the fight against tyranny, he is also the prophet and leader of the fight to keep freedom from destroying itself and humanity.

This dovetails with Leon Aron's article ("Three Cheers for Russian Democracy," Jan. 3/Jan. 10) on the slow but encouraging creep of freedom in Russia, in which he proclaims, in effect, that as long as people are free we are safe.

But the 20th century should have destroyed that illusion. Hitler was elected chancellor; communism arose in Russia and China from the decay or failures of regimes that, if not democratic, at least were lurching that way. Democracy is not a guarantee of freedom or good, but only the best possible way of attaining it.



Freedom, alone, can be used for good or evil.

John Paul understands that freedom is not necessarily self-correcting or self-sustaining; he also understands that it is not the ultimate good. For this, along with his role in destroying Soviet communism, he should have shared the title of Man of the Century.

JAMES E. TYNEN
Pittsburgh, PA

McCAIN MISGIVINGS

MY COMPLIMENTS TO Fred Barnes for "John McCain, Winging It" (Jan. 3/Jan. 10). As a garden-variety Republican eager to vote for the presidential candidate most likely to facilitate constructive change in taxation, regulation, foreign policy, and education, I have watched C-SPAN faithfully in addition to (unavoidably) reading and hearing media "wisdom" on the candidates.

For all the obvious reasons, it's hard not to root for Sen. McCain. And there is something to be said for the poetic justice of following up a draft-dodger with a POW.

But as one who believes that McCain-Feingold will usher in a nightmare of First Amendment problems, I have looked for other issues upon which to base support for Sen. McCain for the Republican nomination. I have found none, other than the prospect of his giving snappy rejoinders to irritating "allies" such as France.

Contrary to media "wisdom," George W. Bush is the candidate of substance, John McCain the candidate of style.

JUDITH LOWN
San Marcos, CA

"THE PRINTER DID IT"

RECENTLY YOU PUBLISHED a "Not a Parody" article about a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development brochure that was incorrectly translated ("Andrew Cuomo's Creole Stew," Nov. 29). Here are the facts:

HUD contracted with the Government Printing Office, which prints documents from all federal agencies, to do this translation in 11 languages plus Braille. The Government Printing Office hired contractors to do the translations, including one who produced an inaccurate and insulting document claiming to be Jamaican Creole, which was delivered to HUD.

As soon as we realized we had received the bad translation, we stopped distributing the document. It is unfortunate that this faulty and objectionable translation was delivered to HUD by the Government Printing Office, and it is understandable that it has upset those who received the document.

DAVID M. EGNER
Deputy Asst. Sec. for Public Affairs
Department of Housing
and Urban Development
Washington, DC

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the weekly Standard

Depends on What the Meaning of Flip-Flop Is

Last fall, Al Gore launched his most ambitious reinvention yet: of his own persona. He changed the color of his suits, hired new campaign staff, moved his headquarters to Nashville, and sent his flacks out to spread the word that, after seven years of loyal servitude to Bill Clinton, he was now his own man. Nice try.

For Al Gore is still, and will always be, Bill Clinton's man. He made that abundantly clear last week. The screw-ups themselves were not Clintonian. Gore's blundering pledge to subject Joint Chiefs of Staff appointees to a gratuitous loyalty test on the issue of gays-in-the-military was the sort of gaffe his glib boss rarely commits. And Bill Clinton—give him this much credit—has always worked respectfully with former Joint Chiefs chairman Colin Powell. Gore apparatchik Donna Brazile, on the other hand, crudely accused the retired general of being an Uncle Tom for the Republican party.

This, then, was Al Gore's test. A political disaster area of his own making needed quick cleaning up. So what did he do? He turned Clintonian: aggressively dishonest and self-righteously shifty.

Here he was on the January 10 *Today* show, under interrogation by Katie Couric:

> COURIC: Let's talk about your campaign manager, Donna Brazile's comments. She's the first African-American to manage a presidential campaign. And in a recent interview, she said that Republicans use blacks like General Colin Powell—a former chairman, of course, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—and Congressman J.C. Watts for photo-ops, but don't really care about African-Americans. Let me put on the screen exactly what she said. "Republicans bring out Colin Powell and J.C. Watts because they have no program, no policy. They play the game because they have no love and no joy. They'd rather take pictures with black children than feed them." Mr. Powell, I know, General Powell sent you a note saying he was offended . . .
>
> GORE: Mm-hmm.
>
> COURIC: . . . and disappointed. He urged the campaign not to play the race card . . .
>
> GORE: Mm.
>
> COURIC: . . . saying it would hurt the cause of all children. I know you spoke with General Powell. Did you apologize for those comments?
>
> GORE: That was the spirit of the call. That word wasn't used. But I regretted the—the way he heard Donna's comments. She does a fantastic job. She . . .

How Clintonian. Gore doesn't regret that his aide is a racial demagogue. No, not at all. He doesn't even apologize. Rather, he regrets that Colin Powell "heard" an insult. This is the regret of the convict—no, he didn't do anything wrong, but he sure is sorry they locked him up for it.

Now consider Gore's effort to recover from his Joint Chiefs gaffe. He could have said, simply, I goofed in the heat of debate, I misspoke. Instead, he chose the Clintonian route: You don't understand the meaning of the words I used. Here is what actually transpired in the debate moderated by Peter Jennings in New Hampshire on January 5:

> JENNINGS: I'd like to ask you both a question about a litmus test, if I may. Mr. Bradley used the phrase, and you've both talked about gays in the military. You both believe that gays should have the right to serve openly in the military. President Clinton's had great difficulty. The Joint Chiefs as well as the Congress have been a principal obstacle to that particular policy. If you become president—I'll ask you one at a time, you first Mr. Gore—if you become president, would you nominate members of the Joint Chiefs who only support your gay policy? In other words, will it be a litmus test?
>
> GORE: I have rejected the notion of litmus tests on the Supreme Court by saying that there are ways to find out the kind of judgment somebody has without posing a specific litmus test. I think that it's a little different where the Joint Chiefs of Staff are concerned, because you're not interfering with an independent judicial decision. As commander in chief, a president is giving orders, in effect, or he is, he is the superior of the officers that are reporting to the commander in chief in the chain of command. I would try to bring about the kind of change in policy on the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that President Harry Truman brought about after World War II in integrating the military. And I think that would require those who wanted to serve on the posi-

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tion of, on the Joint Chiefs, to be in agreement with that policy. So, yes.

JENNINGS: So, I understand it correctly, you would only nominate members of the Joint Chiefs if they supported your gay support—

GORE: Here—I think that the new policy has to be implemented in a way that accomplishes the goal, and yet recognizes the practical challenges that the military leadership will have to confront in making that change. I would insist, before appointing anybody to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that that individual support my policy. And yes, I would make that a requirement.

JENNINGS: Mr. Bradley, would you, sir?

BRADLEY: I—I can say that in much shorter words, I think, and that is when you're president you are commander in chief, and you issue orders. And soldiers are good soldiers, and they follow your orders. A consultation process takes place, certainly, in which you hear their view, but when you follow an order, no matter—I'm sure that there are people in the military today that don't agree with President Clinton on 50 things. But my sense is that when you're president of the United States, military people are loyal to their commander in chief, whatever the policy is that the commander in chief calls for for the country, and that's what I expect them to do if I'm president of the United States and we move towards gays in the military—which I intend to do.

Al Gore plainly screwed up, fundamentally misconceiving the relationship between the commander in chief and his top military officers. Proof that he did so can be seen in Bradley's adroit rejoinder, which gets it precisely right: "You issue orders. And soldiers are good soldiers."

So two days later, Gore calls the traveling press corps together in Des Moines to try to explain himself better on the issue. And here is what he says: "I didn't use that term, litmus test." But of course he did. Well, then: "That is not what I meant to convey—that's what you heard." There's that hearing problem, again. "What I meant to convey," he went on, "was I would not tolerate, nor would any commander in chief, nor would any president tolerate orders not being followed." Yes, that probably is what he now wishes he had said. Why, then, does he keep insisting that it's somebody else's fault—"that's what you heard"—when he misspeaks? Because this is how he learned to play the game from Bill Clinton.

You might think that comparisons with Clinton's notorious postmodern lawyering—"it depends on what the meaning of the word *is* is"—are the last thing Gore would want to inspire. Obviously not. Because the capping performance came when Gore's number one attack dog, Bob Shrum, did a bad James Carville imitation on *Meet the Press*, trying to bully his host and another guest into a politically useful confusion about what Gore had said. The Des Moines statement, Shrum insisted, was merely a repetition of what Gore said in New Hampshire.

Here's Shrum: "There's no flip-flop, and it's the same statement. What he said both times was that he would insist that people appointed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff agree to support his policy as president. He never said in the New Hampshire debate that he would inquire into their personal convictions. His litmus test is the constitutional one, civilian control of the military. . . . I defy you—I'll bet you 10 bucks. Find him saying that he's going to examine their personal convictions."

Carville, at least, had the class to offer a hundred thousand dollars last summer when he was similarly attempting to sow confusion about Mrs. Clinton's embarrassing use in an interview of the "abuse excuse." Gore and Shrum are less extravagant: Clintonian to the core, but only 10 bucks' worth.

We don't presume to offer counsel to the voters in Democratic primaries. Clintonism has a record of success at the polls, and that may be what Gore is counting on. But let there be no confusion about what Bill Clinton's legacy is: Al Gore embodies it, and he's running for president.

—Richard Starr, for the Editors

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Steve Forbes, Mr. Nice Guy

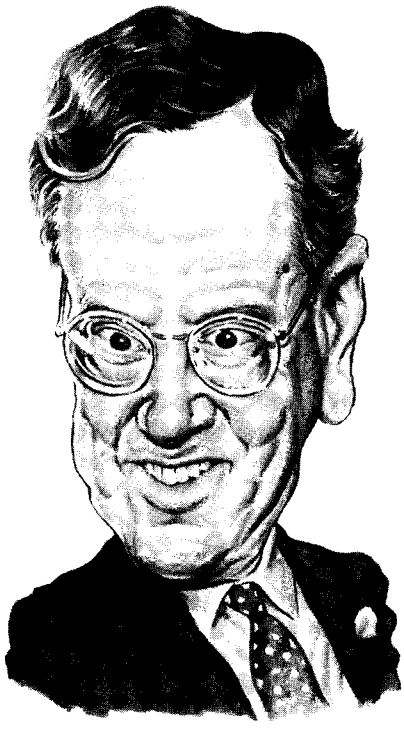
Everyone thought he would start attacking Bush sooner. Why didn't he? BY FRED BARNES

LAST SPRING, representative David Dreier of California, a George W. Bush supporter, telephoned Steve Forbes. Dreier is an old pal of Bush, having met him in 1978 when both attended a Republican training school for House candidates (both lost that year). Dreier, genial and gregarious, had come to know Forbes because of their mutual interest in supply-side economics.

But it was not economics the congressman had on his mind. He said he hoped Forbes wouldn't air attack ads against Bush like the Forbes spots that savaged Bob Dole in the 1996 Republican presidential race. And by the way, Dreier said, he'd been talking to Bush and mentioned that Forbes would make a great treasury secretary in a Bush administration. Bush responded favorably to the idea, he added. Forbes was not amused. He told Dreier to ask Bush what cabinet post he'd like in a Forbes administration.

Dreier's call wasn't the only one to Forbes with a similar message: Refrain from attacking Bush with searing TV commercials. Several callers—friends of Forbes who are backing Bush's bid for the GOP presidential nomination—also suggested Forbes consider dropping out of the race and running for the open Senate seat in New Jersey. Bush himself spoke several times to financier Dick Gilder, a Forbes friend and fund-raiser, in hopes of averting a Forbes television fusillade.

So, did the calls, instigated by Bush strategist Karl Rove, work? It's impossible to know for sure, but Forbes *did* wait until two weeks before the Iowa caucuses on January 24 to air his first anti-Bush commercial. And it is relatively mild—mild, that is, compared with the ferocious ads assailing Dole in the 1996 race. Then, Forbes went on the air with anti-Dole ads within weeks of announcing for the nomination. And the ads, in one form or another, ran for three months. Dole, though he won the nomination, believes his campaign never fully recovered.



Drew Friedman

Steve Forbes

Forbes and campaign manager Bill Dal Col insist the private calls didn't spook them. (Forbes says at least three calls were Bush-inspired.) Rather, they were waiting for a political opening, which came when Bush announced his plan to reduce taxes a few weeks ago. "He led with his chin," says Forbes. Once Bush claimed to be a tax-cutter, Dal Col says he called consultant John McLaughlin and said, "Let's go" with an anti-Bush commercial. The ad features Mary Williams, who runs an anti-tax group in Texas. She says Bush broke his pledge not to propose increases in sales or business taxes.

At least three members of Forbes's campaign team, however, wanted TV attacks on Bush (and even on senator John McCain) to begin much earlier. One adviser says Forbes held back because he enjoyed "being Mr. Positive. Nobody wants to be thought ill of." But Dal Col says they simply decided the campaign shouldn't "fight the last war. Any campaign can take down any candidate now in two weeks, as long as you're willing not to win." What Dal Col suggested, in other words, was that there's a potential backlash from airing strongly negative ads. This is exactly what callers from Bush's orbit had warned Forbes.

Bush aides don't claim credit for delaying attacks by Forbes. But they suspect they helped. One friend of Forbes says Rove's machinations played a major part. The Rove effort was two-pronged, the friend says: first, public statements that sharp attacks would wind up hurting Forbes; then the phone calls. Says Dreier: "Steve has had many friends say to him, 'Let's not go hard negative.'" And Bush advisers think Gilder, the Forbes fund-raiser, and Forbes's own brothers were critical in keeping the campaign from going on the attack earlier and more harshly.

Bush himself may have unnerved Forbes, a Bush aide says. In the January 10 debate in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bush looked directly at Forbes and winked as Forbes was criticizing his record on taxes as governor of Texas. Forbes quickly turned his head. According to the Bush aide, Forbes went out of his way after that debate to avoid contact with Rove, whom he'd known when both were presidentially appointed members of the Board for International Broadcasting.

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Rove and George W. actually engineered Forbes's reappointment by President Bush as board chairman in 1991, the Bush aide said. "George W. Bush was responsible for continuing Steve Forbes's presence on the national stage," the aide added.

At the Michigan debate, Forbes fervently defended the anti-Bush spot. "The ad is accurate," he declared. "And I think that's what makes the American people cynical about politics. Pledges are made and then quickly forgotten after the election." Bush argued that he signed a tax cut, ran on his record, and was overwhelmingly reelected in 1998—and that should dispose of any allegations that he isn't a true tax-cutter. To this, Forbes said, "Given your opposition and given that you're a good guy, I would have voted for you, too. But you did break that pledge."

For his part, Rove dismisses the Forbes ad as "too little, too late, too convoluted." Nonetheless, Bush quickly aired a commercial of his own that responds to charges by both Forbes and McCain. It extols Bush as a tax-cutter. The Bush campaign also intends to exploit an appearance made by Forbes at the governor's mansion in Austin in 1997. He spoke to the Governor's Council, made up of big donors to Bush's campaigns for governor. Rove has lined up roughly 30 attendees ready to declare that Forbes lauded Bush's efforts in the same tax fight in which he now criticizes Bush for breaking a promise.

Where does all this leave Bush and Forbes pre-Iowa caucuses? Though McCain isn't competing in Iowa, Bush is more worried about him than Forbes. Still, he'd like Forbes to go away. Bush isn't fond of Forbes. He was incensed when Forbes spoke at a fund-raiser in 1998 for his chief nemesis in the Texas GOP, Tom Pauken. But Bush ought to be grateful that Forbes hasn't treated him as he did Dole four years ago. The harshest words coming from the Forbes campaign have been Dal Col's, not Forbes's. And the truth is, Forbes *would* make a pretty good treasury secretary in a Bush administration. ♦

The McCain-Bush Tax Wars

Bush says he'll cut taxes more. It's either the end of McCain or the end of an era. BY DAVID BROOKS

"WHAT? Are we giving up?!" That's what one McCain loyalist moaned as the Republican tax debate raged in New Hampshire last week. His man, John McCain, had just proposed tax cuts far smaller than the ones George W. Bush has on the table. Moreover, McCain launched his program amidst a swell of political rhetoric that sounded, from the news reports, like it was written by James Carville. McCain said the Bush tax cuts were too big and too risky. He accused Bush of skewing his tax cuts to favor the rich.

The prevailing view in Washington conservative circles was that this was close to political suicide. Republican primary voters don't respond to class-war rhetoric. New Hampshire voters, famously anti-tax, don't want to hear that the government needs to keep more of their money, especially at a time when the tax burden is at an all-time high. Hadn't Ronald Reagan demonstrated that big tax cuts are the key ingredient in Republican victories? Hadn't George Bush the elder beaten Bob Dole in 1988 in New Hampshire on the strength of a no-new-taxes pledge? Was McCain really going to contest the New Hampshire primary with a plan that seems to appeal more to Al Hunt than Adam Smith? "Throw us into that briar patch," Bush aide Karl Rove told Paul Gigot of the *Wall Street Journal*.

The Bush campaign quickly went on the offensive, pointing out how much more money voters would get back under their plan—not just voters at the top of the income scale, but voters toward the bottom, too. But a funny thing's happened over the past two weeks, since taxes emerged as the central issue in the Republican race. By and large, McCain's poll numbers have not sagged. In December, a Quinnipiac College poll showed Bush and McCain in a dead heat in New Hampshire. But a Quinnipiac poll released on January 13 showed McCain leading Bush by nine points, 37 percent to 28 percent. A Reuters poll released January 11 had McCain up 41 percent to 34 percent. The American Research Group tracking poll showed virtually no movement between January 4 and January 12. Bush was ahead, but barely: 35 percent to 32 percent, within the margin of error.

There's no evidence that McCain is helping himself with his tax plan. But neither is there much evidence that it has been the slam-dunk political disaster that most Republican and conservative savants think it is. And that means the New Hampshire primary is going to be a fascinating case study. For two decades now, tax-cutting supply-siders have been crushing the green-eyeshade fiscal-austerity wing of the party, at least on the campaign trail. Even Bob Dole, who regards supply-siders the way most of us regard spiders in the shower, was forced to capitulate to political reality, naming Jack Kemp as his running mate in 1996 and adopting an across-the-board tax cut. But if John McCain can go on and win the New Hampshire primary with his rhetoric about entitlement protection and fiscal prudence, it will signal a seismic shift in the Republican electorate.

David Brooks is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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It's more than a little ironic that George W. Bush has emerged as the supply-side champion. During his years hanging around his father's administration, he certainly didn't go out of his way to befriend the growth wing of the party. His father cut the infamous 1990 budget deal that put deficit reduction above tax reduction. And as governor, Bush proposed a complex tax bill in 1997, which cut many taxes but raised others. Texas legislators, most of them conservatives, gave the plan a frigid reception, and many anti-tax activists think Bush is a credible candidate today only because the legislature gutted his proposal and put in place a straightforward tax-cutting program.

Nonetheless, in campaign mode, Bush asked Lawrence Lindsey, one of the most credible supply-side economists, and a team of others from the Hoover Institution and beyond to come up with a tax plan. They put together a proposal that cuts the top marginal tax rate from 39.6 percent to 33 percent, with similar marginal rate cuts down the line. Bush promoted the plan in vintage supply-side fashion, "The federal government, in peacetime, has no business taking more than 33 percent of anyone's paycheck. After all, the entrepreneurs of America create jobs, take risks, and make their profits with honor. My tax cut plan will expand their ranks by encouraging American enterprise, not penalizing it."

Bush continued, "There are only two things that can be done with a surplus. It can be used by government, as the president proposes. Or it can be used by Americans to save and build and invest. . . . I choose the creation of wealth, over the care and feeding of government."

The supply-siders, recognizing an ally, drifted from the Forbes campaign to the Bush campaign. Last week, Forbes ran attack ads saying the Bush tax cuts weren't big enough. Arthur Laffer responded that Forbes's ads against Bush "are the most anti-Reagan thing on earth." Lawrence Kudlow, another key supply-sider, said that Forbes was alienating his political base, "the small but influential group of supply-side economists that engineered the Reagan tax cuts."

Fred Harper

John McCain

The most interesting shift has occurred at the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page. The *Journal* doesn't endorse candidates, but you don't have to be the Oracle of Delphi to figure out which candidate the *Journal* editorialists look upon most favorably. The editorial page has longstanding ties to Steve Forbes. But as the Forbes candidacy was fading, editor Robert Bartley went down to Austin with Amity Shlaes and Paul Gigot and talked taxes with the governor. Bartley came back and wrote a piece that caused early morning gnashing of teeth at Forbes headquarters. He likened George W. Bush to Ronald Reagan, supposed lightweights who can get things done. Bartley's message was clear. It was a laying on of hands. Bush understands the way the world works.

When McCain came up with his fiscal prudence, Bartley responded in a column that stung: "Despite a generally conservative disposition, it seems, the senator's honor muse somehow has a tendency to recycle the Beltway's conventional wisdom." Paul Gigot followed with a column the next day criticizing McCain-omics explicitly. McCain's tax cuts are a "relative pittance," Gigot noted. "The essence of his emerging tax strategy, in fact, sounds a lot like Al Gore's. Propose a variety of small, targeted tax cuts that at least let you claim to favor tax cutting. But then attack anything larger for 'leaving Social Security in danger.'"

On McCain's side, there is a disjunction between the substance of the plan and the way it is being promoted. Kevin Hassett, who works a few yards away from Lawrence Lindsey at the American Enterprise Institute, was a principal formulator of McCain's tax plan. He argues that there is more than one way to be a supply-sider. The economists who fixate on the top marginal rate are being "overly theological." The better approach is to start with a grand vision of what the ideal tax regime looks like.

The best regime, Hassett believes, would place almost no tax burdens on savings. Instead it would tax consumption (George W. Bush's tax plan in Texas in 1997 also shifted the burden to consumption). Hassett says

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that if you give middle-class people more reason to save, you will unleash more capital for investment than you would by reducing the top marginal rate on income. The McCain plan includes Family Security Accounts, into which families could place up to $6,000 tax-deferred per year, as long as the money stayed there for at least one year. The savings and interest could be withdrawn after a year without any penalty.

This is a step toward a consumption tax. Since income minus savings equals consumption, Hassett says, if you reduce the tax on that portion of income that goes to savings, you are shifting the burden onto consumption. This is a better way of taxing consumption than the old-fashioned way, a sales tax collected at the cash register. In the age of e-commerce, he says, it doesn't make sense to try to impose an old-fashioned consumption tax at the point of sale. Better to collect it up top, at the point of income.

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Hassett makes a supply-side case for the McCain plan, saying it packs powerful growth incentives. But all the candidates' tax proposals are political documents, not legislative documents, and it's a mistake to get lost in the details and arcana. There is no question that the McCain campaign is promoting its plan with rhetoric straight out of the songbook of the Concord Coalition, the group launched by Warren Rudman to worry gravely about deficits and "irresponsible" tax cuts.

The two words that pop up again and again in McCain's tax literature are "responsible" and "security." The McCain campaign sent out a fax two weeks ago that asked menacingly, "Does Bush Plan Leave Money to Save Social Security?" (Their answer was no.) McCain boasts that his plan funnels more money into Social Security to cover liabilities that are owed to those who are soon to retire, while also shifting as much as possible into a privatized pension plan.

In short, Bush promotes his tax plan with traditional supply-side arguments that have carried the day in election after election: Get the money out of Washington. Reduce top marginal rates so entrepreneurs can invest and flourish. You are overtaxed and you deserve your money back. McCain, meanwhile, leans on fiscal austerity arguments that have not worked well with Republican voters in the past: We have to be prudent because we don't want to return to the days of deficits. We have to fund our current entitlement liabilities. We have to pay down the debt. We have to worry about the gap between rich and poor and shouldn't skew tax cuts to the rich. McCain's strategy is both old and daringly new. Old, because it reminds one a bit of Eisenhower-era prudence, and new because nobody has tried to win the Republican primaries with this strategy in a long while.

The odds are still against McCain, but there is at least a plausible case to be made that his campaign has a more accurate reading of the *Zeitgeist* than the Bush campaign. We are living in an anti-political age, when most Americans feel detached from public life. They don't expect much from their government. Many people feel they have more to fear from government doing something wrong than they have to gain from government doing something right. So it is possible they will prefer whichever candidate seems the more modest and risk averse. That is how McCain is pitching his tax plan.

Furthermore, this is a conservative era. It is not conservative in the Newt Gingrich/Republican revolution sense. It is conservative in the old-fashioned sense. People cherish the status quo and want to preserve it. McCain goes out of his way to say that his is the true conservative plan, and by the old definition of conservative he is right. It is possible that in affluent, post-culture-war America, voters will opt for a candidate who seems to favor restraint and sobriety. Conservative in temperament, these voters may reject ambitious plans conceived in some think tank, and gravitate instead toward the candidate who is criticized for being too modest. They may prefer a candidate who talks about shoring up imperfect existing institutions—like Social Security—to a candidate who proposes bolder plans of action. After all, if there is one thing we have learned about American voters this decade, it is that they don't like dramatic plans from the left (heath care) or the right (the Republican revolution). They are looking for modesty.

Of course GOP primary voters may be different. These are the people who cheered on the Republican revolution, the ones who listen to Rush. But even in the strongholds of

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the right, the old passions seem a little subdued. The fires of social conservatism are not nearly as hot this election as they were in past elections. The same may be true of economic conservatives. Moreover, Republican primary voters are more affluent than ever before, and affluent people tend to be milder than angry populists. Affluent people may also vote their social identity more and their pocketbook less. That is to say, they may rather support a McCain plan that makes them feel like sober, public-spirited citizens than a Bush plan that returns more money to them. In other words, we may be seeing a shift in the conservative temper, away from the angry spirit of the tax revolt, and back to the risk-averse spirit of upper-middle-class fiscal prudence.

Also, McCain may be able to get away with this sobriety on tax matters because he is so high-flown in his rhetoric about patriotism and national purpose. He doesn't come across as a bland Howard Baker, because he is so lofty when talking about foreign policy and political reform.

The economists can argue about which plan is better on the merits, but it all makes for a fascinating political experiment, which comes wrapped in ironies. John McCain, who started his campaign as the bold maverick, now stands, on economic matters, as the prudent conservative. The supply-side Reagan tax cuts paved the way for this era of unprecedented prosperity. But prosperity created a massive class of affluent burghers who may respond more to the genteel concerns of the Concord Coalition than to the raw zeal of the supply-side entrepreneur. George Bush, who rejected his father's instinctive fiscal prudence, may end up being beaten by a man who adopted it.

It's still unlikely. But if John McCain with his cautious proposal does end up beating George W., somewhere in the inner sanctum of some plush office in Washington, Richard Darman will be laughing. ♦

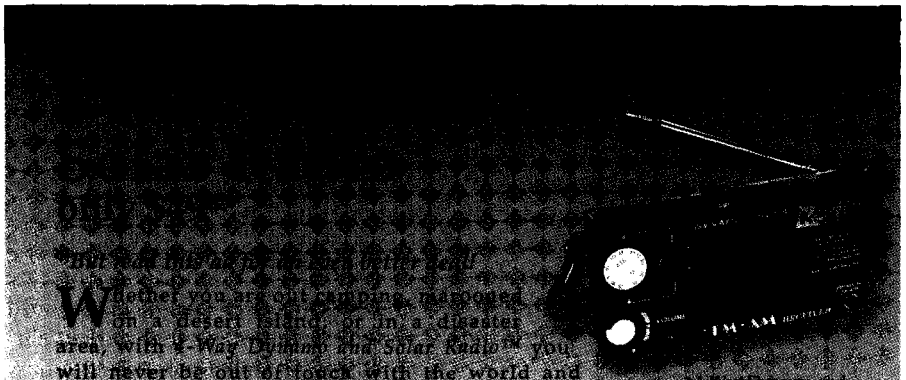
The Democrats' Marathon

Why Gore vs. Bradley could last until the convention. BY MATTHEW REES

IF BILL BRADLEY'S CANDIDACY isn't finished off by a defeat in New Hampshire on February 1, it will be doomed by the five Gore-friendly Southern primaries on March 14—so goes the emerging conventional wisdom. But this misses the mark. For several reasons, Gore will find it difficult to deliver a knockout punch. Indeed, the contest could last until June or longer. Says Bradley's communications director, Anita Dunn, "Both sides are quietly settling in for a protracted struggle."

The beneficiary of their struggle will presumably be the Republican nominee. A former Republican National Committee chairman, Rich Bond, notes that as the Gore-Bradley battle is prolonged, the two Democrats' resources will be depleted, the party will become increasingly fractured, and the candidates will push each other farther and farther left. When set against the likelihood that Bush will quickly wrap up the nomination with over $35 million

Matthew Rees is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.



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still at his disposal, this prospect reinforces Republican confidence about November. Indeed, Allan Lichtman, a professor at American University, notes that in every instance where the losing contender for a major party's presidential nomination has managed to win more than one-third of the delegates in the primaries—a threshold Bradley (or Gore) could easily meet—that party's nominee has lost the general election.

Here's why reporters may still be writing about a competitive Democratic race well into the summer:

¶ *Money*: Bradley outraised Gore two-to-one in the fourth quarter of 1999, and he should have $4 million more to spend this year than the vice president. Gore's likely loss in New Hampshire could widen this gap; in the past, a defeat in the primary there has hampered fund-raising. Bradley's money advantage will help him compete nationally and bounce back from inevitable setbacks (a luxury Gary Hart did not have when he was challenging Walter Mondale for the Democratic nomination in 1984). Indeed, he could offset his likely defeats in the Southern primaries, for example, by turning in a strong performance in Illinois a week later, and in Pennsylvania two weeks after that.

¶ *The calendar*: After the New Hampshire primary on February 1, there's not another Democratic contest until March 7. In a presidential campaign, this is an eternity. And the gap should benefit Bradley. With more money than Gore and, most likely, a New Hampshire victory in his back pocket, he'll have five weeks to build on his momentum in delegate-rich states like California, where he's already made inroads in Silicon Valley, and New York.

Even better for Bradley is that a slew of friendly states hold a primary or caucuses on March 7: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Missouri, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington. By contrast, the only pro-Gore states voting that day are Georgia, Ohio, and Maryland. This will be Bradley's best opportunity to prove he has national appeal and to persuade the media, and the all-important superdelegates—party bigshots who automatically get votes at the convention—that Gore is vulnerable.

¶ *Delegate allocation*: In the vast majority of Republican primaries and caucuses, the candidate who wins the most votes is rewarded with all the state's delegates. The Democrats are more egalitarian, doling out delegates according to each candidate's percentage of the vote. The effect, says Brian Lunde, a former executive director of the Democratic National Committee, is that "you don't win much when you win." This helps Bradley, who remains the underdog in more states than Gore, but who's nevertheless likely to receive up to 40 percent of the vote in a number of states.

¶ *An early Bush sweep*: In the four weeks following the New Hampshire primary there will be Republican primaries or caucuses in Hawaii, Delaware, South Carolina, Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, Virginia, Washington, and North Dakota. In other words, the GOP race could be settled by March 7, when the Democrats are just getting revved up. That could provide a big boost to Bradley, particularly in California: Polls show he's more popular than Gore with independents and Republicans, and California's open primary leaves them free to vote Democratic. If Bush (or, for that matter, McCain) has already wrapped up the Republican nomination, these voters may choose to participate in a contest that still matters.

¶ *Pride and the polls*: Gore's nightmare is that he wraps up the nomination sometime this spring, but Bradley refuses to leave the race. There are a number of reasons why this could happen. The polls might continue to show Bradley besting Gore in a head-to-head matchup with the Republican nominee, prompting superdelegates to throw their support behind him. These polls, coupled with control of a few hundred delegates, could also convince Bradley that he's entitled to keep campaigning. Gore and his aides would trumpet the need for party unity, but Bradley could cite one of the vice president's leading supporters, Ted Kennedy, who stayed in the race against Jimmy Carter in 1980.

Another factor is that Bradley has never been much of a partisan. "Pleas for him to withdraw for the sake of party unity are likely to fall on deaf ears," says Paul Begala, a former Clinton aide. Similarly, after Gore has spent months hammering Bradley as a quitter, the reserved former hoop star may decide to stay and fight. (Bradley feels the Gore campaign has recklessly misrepresented his views, and his personal animosity for Gore is much greater than any found in the Republican field.)

And then there's Bradley's home state, New Jersey, which joins four other states in being the last to hold a primary, on June 6. Bradley could say that he wanted to give New Jersey Democrats a chance to vote for him.

Just what will it mean if the Democratic contest drags on for months? "It's a significant headache," says Jody Powell, who was Jimmy Carter's press secretary in 1980 when Kennedy was seeking to unseat the president. Indeed, the 1980 election showed the damage that can be done by a lengthy primary contest. The Bradley campaign insists it understands this history. "For our party to be successful in November," says top Bradley aide Jacques DeGraff, "we can't drag things out until June."

But, DeGraff adds, no one should expect a quick and easy Bradley withdrawal. "We're prepared, structured, and organized to wage this battle from congressional district to congressional district, from state to state, all the way to the convention floor." ♦

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Keyes to the Presidency?

If talking were all it took, Alan Keyes would be on his way to the White House. BY TUCKER CARLSON

Council Bluffs, Iowa

It's dinner time on Wednesday night in Council Bluffs and close to 400 people have gathered on the basketball court at Iowa Western Community College to hear presidential candidate Alan Keyes give one of his famous speeches. Keyes hasn't actually shown up yet (he's often late), so Chris Jones, the director of his Iowa office, takes the podium and does his best to describe what an Alan Keyes speech is like. Several months ago, Jones says, the Keyes campaign sent him a video of the candidate giving a speech. Jones was home in Utah with his wife and four children at the time, and was pretty certain he never wanted to work in politics again. Then he popped the Keyes tape into the VCR. By the time it was over, Jones isn't ashamed to admit, he was weeping, overwhelmed by the force of Keyes's personality and ideas. Jones left Utah, joined the Keyes campaign, and never looked back.

Just remembering it all seems to put Jones in an emotional mood. A few minutes later he is talking about the American Revolution—a grassroots revolt against government tyranny that, come to think of it, has a lot in common with the Alan Keyes for President campaign—when without warning he begins to cry. Jones's voice is breaking, but with effort he makes his point: Alan Keyes is an American patriot on the order of Samuel Adams. "He has never changed his mind," Jones says, "because his mind was made up in 1776."

Tucker Carlson is a staff writer at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

It's not clear if Jones means this literally (Alan Keyes, man out of time). Before he can elaborate, Keyes himself appears at the back of the gym. Microphone in hand, his gold crucifix bouncing against the outside of his shirt, Keyes jogs to the front of the room and greets the crowd. For the next 55 minutes, he gives the best speech of the 2000 presidential campaign.

Actually, that isn't quite right, both because *every* Alan Keyes speech is the best speech of whatever campaign he happens to be running in, and because what Keyes does bears so little resemblance to an ordinary political performance. A Keyes speech doesn't open with jokes. It isn't held together with anecdotes about Real Americans and the problems they face. It contains almost no biographical information about the man giving it. And of course it is never written down. Keyes speaks without notes—always—and in two or three hours on stage orating and answering questions he is unlikely to utter a single sentence that isn't grammatically perfect. He never says "um."

Most unusual of all, a Keyes speech rarely mentions politics, at least as most people understand it. Keyes is a preacher, his rallies religious revivals, down to the passing of the hat at the end of the service. (Or, in Keyes's case, a plastic jug stuffed with bills.) Keyes doesn't bother to give sermons on policy minutia. Instead he begins with a

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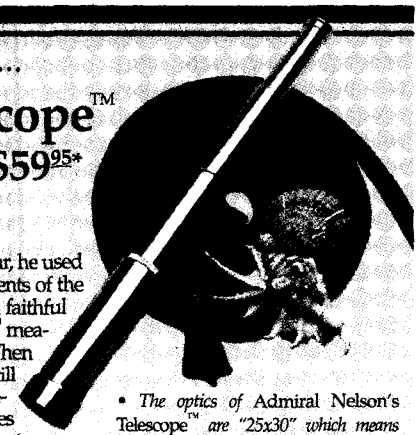

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topic like The Purpose of Government, moving fluidly to The Meaning of Liberty, before winding up in an extended rumination on The Relationship Between God and Law. Almost everything Keyes says is totally abstract—a violation of Rule One of political oratory—but perfectly comprehensible. And not at all boring. Audiences are spellbound.

Keyes is so good on the stump, it's a shame he's campaigning at all. There's something humiliating about having to pretend you're going to be elected president when just about everybody in the world knows you're not. Midway through Keyes's speech in Council Bluffs it occurs to me that someone—a foundation, maybe, or any one of the seemingly countless eccentric rich conservatives out there—ought to pay Keyes a salary and have him travel the country full-time giving his sermons. Keyes would no longer have to pose as a politician, and audiences could hear the most compelling articulation of the pro-life position currently on the market. As a politician, Keyes has been trounced twice running for the Senate in Maryland and receives single-digit support in Republican presidential primaries. As a public speaker, he can give Americans a fascinating kind of civics lesson.

Of course, if he weren't running for president, Keyes wouldn't get to be in the debates, and with Keyes you get the feeling that participating in the debates is the whole point of the exercise. (For one thing, it allows him to refer to the other people on stage, the ones with actual voter support, as "colleagues"—as in, "My colleague, Mr. Bush.") Fours years ago, Keyes, along with three other single-digit candidates, was excluded from a Republican primary debate in South Carolina. Keyes played the race card, accusing the debate's sponsors of trying "to stand in the schoolhouse door and tell me I can't participate in this process." Then he went on a hunger strike in protest. Three days later, a "tyrannical television station" in Atlanta barred him entry to the next debate. After two attempts to storm the studio, Keyes was led away in handcuffs. "My crime is being qualified to be president," he explained later.

Alan Keyes

Illustration by Earl Keleny

At some point, the people who plan debates decided that keeping Keyes out wasn't worth the effort, and this time around he has appeared at all nine. He has savored every one. "A lot of people when they watch the debates think that I have won them all," Keyes tells the crowd in Council Bluffs. "I am not going to disagree with them."

Nor would most viewers who watched Keyes in action. He was, as always, masterful. But what have his performances achieved? Nothing Keyes could say will bring him much closer to the White House. On the other hand, his presence (both in the debates and on the ground in Iowa) has hurt Bauer and Forbes, both of whom are making roughly the same pitch to religious conservatives. Meanwhile, Keyes's eloquence has helped make Bush appear even shallower.

Last week in Michigan, for instance, moderator Tim Russert asked each of the candidates how the United States should respond to AIDS in Africa. "I think this is a compassionate nation," Bush said, "and I think we ought to rally other compassionate nations around the world to provide the money to help the folks in Africa." Bush went on to point out that "this is a compassionate land and we need to rally the people of compassion in the world to help when there's a terrible tragedy like this in Africa."

When the question came to him, Keyes, who speaks six languages and wrote his Harvard Ph.D. thesis on Alexander Hamilton, seized the opportunity to expound on the role of licentiousness in the global moral

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crisis. It's a crisis that money cannot solve, Keyes said. "I think that this whole discussion is based on a premise that reveals the corruption of our thought." The audience applauded.

It's not unusual for Keyes to disagree with the premise of a discussion, or to imply that a question is almost as stupid as the person who asked it. At a recent debate in South Carolina, Keyes was asked to name the biggest mistake he has made as an adult. "I think about the biggest mistake I might make as an adult would be to treat that as if it's a question that is appropriate to be asked," Keyes replied. Alan Keyes has a temperament problem. And it's even worse in person, when there are no cameras rolling.

Keyes has finished his speech in Council Bluffs, and the hour-long Q&A after that, and yet another hour of talking to supporters in the receiving line. As a talker, Keyes has a bit of Fidel Castro in him—he could probably do six hours without an intermission—and he seems almost eager to sit down with the three reporters present and keep on talking. The crowd has gone home, and yet the two bodyguards Keyes brings with him everywhere remain vigilant, standing only a few feet away, arms crossed in front of them, trying to look menacing. (They succeed.)

Keyes has just finished snapping at a reporter for asking a stupid question. When he gets mad, Keyes's voice, never terribly resonant, gets even higher. Now he is explaining why the obvious choice for Americans—the only *real* choice for anyone with any insight or intelligence—is to elect him president. "I actually have more varied and preparatory experience than anyone running," Keyes is saying. In fact, he says, "I'm the only one who has spent any time thinking in any depth about the principles of the American Constitution."

Keyes is probably right. Which is why he'd make such a terrific civics lecturer. ♦

Pandering to the Middle Class

The four flaws in John McCain's four-point economic plan. BY DAVID FRUM

WHAT IS JOHN MCCAIN UP TO? Until now, McCain has appealed to voters and wowed the press by presenting himself as something bolder and better than an ordinary politician: a man beholden to nobody, a risk-taker, a truth-teller. The tax plan he unveiled last week, however, is the work of quite a different character: The plan is a conventional, poll-driven assemblage of special offers to key constituencies. "It looks like something that would emerge from the Senate finance committee after three weeks of deal-making," quips Stephen Moore of the Cato Institute. The McCain campaign may shrug off worries that their plan lets George W. Bush get to McCain's right ideologically. Their candidate's appeal, after all, is not ideological. But the plan also allows Bush plausibly to present himself as the more daring, imaginative, and principled candidate—and that puts the entire rationale of the McCain candidacy at risk.

McCain's plan promises to accomplish four grand aims: (1) to shore up the Social Security system; (2) to increase savings and investment; (3) to keep the budget in balance by holding the line on spending and closing loopholes; and (4) to provide middle-income Americans with a measure of tax relief. On all four counts, though, the plan raises troubling questions about who John McCain really is and what he really seeks to do.

Start with Social Security. McCain proposes to save the endangered retirement system by funneling close to half a trillion dollars in general revenues into the Social Security trust fund over the next 10 years. In addition, he would permit Americans to direct about 20 percent of their payroll tax money into a personal retirement account.

What McCain and his advisers seem not to recognize is that these two policies are entirely contradictory. If bulking up the Social Security trust fund is an intelligent way to cope with the looming retirement of the Baby Boomers, then his individual retirement account idea makes no sense. If, on the other hand, the personal retirement idea is a good one, then funneling general revenues into Social Security is a waste of money.

Here's why: The pensions of all of today's retirees cost a sum approximately equal to 10 percent of America's payroll. Social Security, however, collects 12.6 percent. The 2.6 percent difference between what's needed and what's collected is paid into the trust fund, which has run a huge surplus since the early 1980s. McCain is now offering to let Americans pay that 2.6 percent into an IRA. If they accept, then the Social Security surplus will vanish.

Is that a problem? It would not be a problem if the surplus disappeared. Most economists agree that the surplus is a fiction, the fiscal equivalent of eating a huge lunch today to protect yourself against being hungry a week from Thursday. When the Baby Boomers are retiring in droves in the 2020s and 2030s, the fact that the U.S. government ran big surpluses in the '00s will be remem-

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bered as a historical curiosity, but not much more.

Now, if the surplus is a fiction, then McCain's plan to permit today's workers to keep the excess portion of their payroll tax is not irresponsible. Yet this would also mean that McCain's plan to pour the regular budget surplus into the Social Security trust fund is pointless.

Internal contradictions plague the McCain camp's suggestions for stimulating savings as well. McCain would permit middle-income wage-earners to put up to $6,000 a year in a tax-sheltered savings vehicle, Family Security Accounts. The money would be taxed when and if it was withdrawn. McCain's economic advisers hail the plan as the first step toward a more consumption-based tax system. But if it's a consumption-based tax system they want, why is another centerpiece of their plan a commitment to keep the Internet free of tax forever? The day is not far off when appliances, cars, and even groceries will be commonly sold over the Net. A promise to keep it tax-free is a promise to move toward the abolition of all sales taxes—exactly the opposite of what sincere proponents of a consumption tax should want to do.

Double messages can be heard from McCain on the balanced-budget issue too. He scourges George W. Bush for offering an irresponsibly big tax cut: Bush's cut is so big, McCain charges, that it could actually push the federal budget back into deficit. But McCain's bona fides as a budget-balancer look increasingly doubtful. As a senator from libertarian Arizona, McCain had a good record as a spending hawk. But as he has moved into the national arena, he has begun—as conservatives mockingly put it—to "grow." Here for example is McCain thinking aloud about health care with a worshipful Joe Klein in the *New Yorker*: "I think we're just going to have to do it on a piecemeal basis. Start with health care for children, and prescription drugs for people who can't afford them now." Two vast new entitlement programs are a start towards "it." One has to wonder what else is included in this ominous little pronoun.

On the revenue side of the budget, McCain claims to have identified billions of dollars of corporate loopholes to be closed. Yet, he is ready to fling open a large loophole all his own: an exemption from income tax on the first $56,000 of pay for military personnel on overseas duty. That should have them clinking their glasses at NATO HQ in Brussels! But for a politician who denounces pandering, you have to wonder: What is the logic here? McCain rightly draws attention to the Clinton administration's neglect of the military. He wants to inspire Americans to appreciate the dangers braved by their soldiers, sailors, and airmen. Fair enough. But how does it make things better to say that men who live underwater on submarines for six months of the year have to pay an income tax while Marine guards at the Paris embassy do not? McCain justifies this special favor by complaining that it is unfair that civilians who live abroad get a tax exemption while military personnel don't. But of course those civilians must pay taxes to their host governments while military personnel don't. If McCain has his way, troops stationed abroad would pay no taxes at all. This is pandering at its most Goretesque.

With his appeals tailored to the middle class, McCain is buying the maximum number of votes at the smallest possible cost.

The biggest question of all is raised by the fourth and last part of McCain's plan: his income tax cut. John McCain owes his spectacular political success of the last few months to the perception that he is the most un-Clinton-like candidate running. He served in Vietnam, he's brave, he's forthright, he's unmanipulative. That makes it all the more disturbing that his tax rhetoric seems to have been photocopied from Bill Clinton's first presidential campaign. Clinton defeated Paul Tsongas in 1992 by promising a tax cut for the "forgotten" middle class. And now here's McCain repeating the same trick. Nobody called this courageous then. How did it become a brave move in the interval?

McCain is making a blatant appeal to the deepest but also wrongest conviction of middle-class Americans: that they are being singled out for government maltreatment while the rich and the poor are cosseted and pampered. When McCain focuses his tax cut on families earning between $40,000 and $70,000—simultaneously ignoring those earning less (who don't vote in Republican primaries) and those earning more (how many of them are there anyway?)—he is tailoring his cut not to those with the strongest claim, but to those with the greatest clout. It's Steve Forbes, in pushing his flat tax, and George W. Bush, in showing concern for the high marginal rates faced by the poor as they quit welfare for work, who are taking political risks for their economic convictions. John McCain, by contrast, is buying the maximum number of votes at the smallest possible cost.

It used to be said of Johnny Carson that he was better than his material. John McCain is widely seen as better than his career. Few even of McCain's most ardent supporters (in the party, anyway, if not the press) have a good word to say for his anti-tobacco crusade and his campaign-finance reform scheme. Now he has delivered an economic plan that is very nearly as bad. It makes you wonder whether the McCain campaign has not at long last found its true slogan: VOTE FOR MCCAIN—DESPITE EVERYTHING. ♦

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Completing the War on Crime

The crime rate has been reduced, but it's still too high. Here's a common sense agenda for bringing it down even further.

By Andrew Peyton Thomas

Is crime dead as a national issue? Ever since the nation's crime rates began their historic surge in the 1960s, crime has been one of a handful of social problems that have reliably dominated presidential campaigns. The current contest, however, is shaping up as the first in 40 years in which crime does not figure prominently in the national debate.

This silence is welcome evidence of national renewal. Even allowing for occasional statistical fudging by police departments in Philadelphia and elsewhere, the tumbling crime rates of the last seven and a half years are a phenomenal and undeniable public-policy success. This coast-to-coast decline—a drop just as historic, if not as steep, as the upward spike in the sixties—has ushered the crime issue off the national stage and focused the attention of politicians and journalists on other domestic concerns.

Even so, it is odd that the nation's leading politicians are treating the crime problem as an anachronism on the order of the Warsaw Pact. They may sincerely believe that crime is no longer a timely issue, but the public begs to differ. When the Gallup organization asked Americans in May 1999 what "the most important problem facing this country" is, the most common response was "ethics/moral/family decline," at 18 percent. Crime was second, with 17 percent. When those who cited "guns/gun control" (10 percent) and "drugs" (5 percent)—terms that are often substitutes for crime—are included, crime dwarfs every other problem. It is likely to be a salient national issue through the 2000 election.

Moreover, anyone hoping that crime rates will indefinitely follow a downward trajectory should take note of the most recent crime statistics. For the first time since crime rates began their nosedive in 1992, there are hard signs that this great decline may be bottoming out. In New York, Los Angeles, and other cities with populations larger than one million, homicide rates are starting to rise. In 1999, New York's homicide rate increased by 8 percent. In Los Angeles, the growth was 2.5 percent.

These upturns are small but significant. Big-city crime trends in the 1990s proved a harbinger of things to come for the rest of the country. Moreover, it was the downturn in urban homicide rates, in particular, that presaged the decline in overall national crime rates. The *New York Times* noted in December that in some of the city's neighborhoods, robbery and burglary have risen in tandem with a resurgence of open, street-corner drug trafficking. Previously sanguine police chiefs and criminologists are beginning to predict the end of the law-and-order boom.

Even after this decade's stunning success—attributable mostly to a 200 percent increase in the incarceration rate and the shrinking of the crime-prone demographic group, young males—America still suffers from a substantial crime problem. Homicide rates, for example, have fallen to their 1967 level. But that is still 42 percent higher than the homicide rate in 1958, when the rate began to creep upward. The *Montreal Gazette* noted recently that in 1998, there were 700 homicides in Chicago but only 42 in Montreal, whose population is two-thirds that of the Windy City. Juvenile arrest rates in the United States remain 24 percent higher than they were in 1969, and a new increase in the population of males between the ages of 15 and 24 is upon us.

Crime control also has become a very expensive endeavor, in both money and wasted lives. It is estimated that on February 15, 2000, the number of Americans in prison or jail will reach 2 million. If we aspire to remain a just and humane society, we cannot incarcerate with equanimity the millions of our fellow citizens who are so lacking in self-control and decency that they cannot be trusted to obey the law.

Sound statecraft and prudent politics require that our national leaders continue to address the nation's refractory

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crime problem. True, the Framers of the Constitution intended crime control to be mostly the province of state and local governments, not federal policymakers. Unfortunately, the federal courts have not adhered to this vision. As a result, federal judges annually fatten the nation's law books with new or annotated criminals' rights that deprive our society of critical tools for law enforcement. Accordingly, the greatest service a president or congressman can render the cause of domestic tranquillity is to check, or preferably reverse, these ill-begotten rulings. Federal elected officials also can authorize experimental projects in the federal criminal justice system to serve as models for criminal justice reforms around the country.

The following are a few common-sense crime-control initiatives that are properly the preserve of federal policymakers, and that deserve discussion in the coming electoral campaign:

¶ *Miranda*. *Miranda* rights are likely to become a major issue in the presidential campaign. Last February, the Fourth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dusted off and upheld a law enacted in 1968 that effectively trumps the most unreasonable aspects of *Miranda* v. *Arizona*, the landmark 1966 Supreme Court case. *Miranda* bars the admission into evidence of all confessions obtained when a suspect in custody was not read his *Miranda* rights—even confessions given freely and knowingly. The law, known as Section 3501, was part of the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1968. It permits confessions to be admitted into trial when the suspect was not read his *Miranda* rights, as long as the judge finds that the confession was voluntary.

Last year, the Fourth Circuit resurrected this overlooked law. The defendant in the case, Charles T. Dickerson, confessed to FBI agents to robbing several banks in Maryland and Virginia. Although the trial court found the confession voluntary, the court suppressed most of his confession because the agents did not read him his Miranda rights soon enough. The Fourth Circuit reversed this ruling, citing Section 3501, and remanded the case for further proceedings. Later this year, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in this case. A decision is expected this summer, just as Democrats and Republicans are assembling at their respective conventions.

The Clinton administration has come down squarely on the side of *Miranda* and against Section 3501. In an extraordinary departure from its long-standing practice of defending acts of Congress in court, the Justice Department actually asserted that Section 3501 is unconstitutional and urged the Supreme Court to overturn the Fourth Circuit's decision. As a result, the Court was constrained to ask Paul Cassell, a law professor at the University of Utah, to present argument on behalf of the statute. A former law clerk to justice Antonin Scalia (while he served on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals) and to chief justice Warren Burger, Cassell is the author of a seminal 1996 article in the *Northwestern Law Review* concerning the social costs of *Miranda*. Cassell estimated that *Miranda* results in an annual loss of 28,000 cases against violent criminals and 79,000 cases against property-crime offenders.

Republicans should steadfastly defend Section 3501—which was passed by a Democratic Congress and signed by President Lyndon Johnson—and dare Democrats to explain their opposition. If the Court strikes down the law on bogus constitutional grounds, Congress should pass a constitutional amendment superseding *Miranda* once and for all.

¶ *The death penalty*. The federal courts' continuing obstruction of the death penalty remains a potent and largely untapped national issue. Over the last 20 years, the average time that a condemned prisoner has sat on death row has almost tripled, to over 11 years. Capital appeals in the federal courts, many of them frivolous, account for a little more than half of this delay.

In 1996, Congress sought to unclog the courts by passing the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. This law, signed by President Clinton, set firm deadlines for inmates to file their habeas corpus petitions—petitions under which federal judges review state death sentences top to bottom. The act also established deadlines for federal judges to rule on these petitions. However, in order for a state to "opt in" and avail itself of these habeas deadlines, the state must be certified as having provided "competent" counsel for indigent prisoners.

Unfortunately, Congress left the job of determining whether states have met this ambiguous standard to federal judges, who have a glaring conflict of interest. Federal judges are notoriously ill-disposed toward both deadlines binding on themselves and perceived congressional meddling regarding habeas corpus. Predictably, they have been in no hurry to certify states as in compliance with these opt-in provisions. Federal judges throughout the country have interpreted the term "competent" so narrowly that states are having trouble even finding, much less employing, attorneys who meet the courts' standards. As a result, not a single state has been certified as complying with the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act. Convicted murderers executed in 1998 spent only 90 days less on death row than did killers executed in 1997.

To streamline this process, Congress should simply repeal the law's opt-in requirements and allow states to use its habeas deadlines without further micromanagement from the federal courts. This policy is fully constitutional and consistent with traditional notions of federalism.

¶ *Faith in prisons*. To reduce the number of prisoners while remaining true to the tough incarceration policies

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David Danz

that have driven down crime rates, our penal institutions must seek to change the hearts of the incarcerated. In Texas, governor George W. Bush has sought to do this by authorizing the InnerChange program. Run by Charles Colson's Prison Fellowship Ministries, InnerChange works to reduce recidivism through religious instruction and inspiration. Inmates who choose to participate follow a strict daily regimen of Bible classes and prayer-centered living designed to reform them into God-fearing, and hence law-abiding, citizens. Prison Fellowship Ministries pays the staff; the Texas Department of Corrections picks up the cost of the inmates' housing, food, correctional officers, and other institutional expenses.

Of the 95 InnerChange alumni released over the last two years, only 16 had been rearrested as of November 1999. This is far below the rate of recidivism both in Texas and in the nation. (In Texas, an average of 50 percent, and nationwide, an average of 33 percent, of inmates are rearrested within *three* years of release.) The U.S. Bureau of Prisons should establish similar model projects throughout the country.

And Republicans should not be afraid to direct the bureau to pay 100 percent of the cost, including salaries. A run-in with the federal courts over prisons and the "separation of church and state" would provide an occasion to remind the public that prisons came into being in this country in the late 18th century in a state-sponsored effort to spark the religious reformation of convicts. Indeed, a band of Quakers ran the first proto-prison in America, Philadelphia's Walnut Street Jail, which opened for business only five years after the Framers convened in Philadelphia to draft the Constitution.

These public-policy proposals would be popular, and the Republicans would have them all to themselves. Democrats would not go along with such rebukes to the judiciary, a great wellspring of their political power.

Even with all our recent success at combating crime, we have become a nation of locks and gates, where many parents are wary of letting their children ride their bicycles unattended down public streets. In 1967, after the first wave of violent crime had hit the country, 31 percent of Americans polled said there was an area within a mile of their residence where they would be afraid to walk alone at night. In 1998, even after nearly a decade of declining crime rates, that number was 41 percent.

There was a time—not so long ago—when Americans did not live this way. Our new national goal in the fight against crime should be nothing less than to drive our crime rates down to their level in the late 1950s, before the crime surge of the 1960s transformed us into what we have become. Reaching parity with other industrialized nations is a laudable and uplifting challenge that could mark the next phase of a national anti-crime effort. But it is an imposing goal for another day, as America's individualism historically has bred relatively high crime rates.

The solution to crime, of course, ultimately lies within our culture and our souls. But at a minimum, the federal courts should cease leading us into temptation by inventing frivolous rights that reward our worst instincts and embolden the least responsible among us. ♦

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TV as a Religion-Free Zone

You might think the problem with television is too much sex and violence. The FCC thinks it's too much religion.

By Justin Torres

When the *Boston Globe* broke the story of John McCain's phone call to the Federal Communications Commission on behalf of a campaign contributor, the media briefly savored the spectacle of America's chief campaign finance reformer caught in a little old-fashioned influence peddling. What they didn't do was read the decision the FCC had coughed up in response to McCain's strong-arm tactics.

They should have, for the real story of FCC Order 99-393 is not McCain's letter at all, but the bombshell buried deep in the innocuous-sounding "Additional Guidance" portion of the ruling: the imposition of unprecedented content restrictions on noncommercial religious broadcasters.

The ruling came in the case of two Pittsburgh television stations—one public (WQED), the other a commercial religious broadcaster (Cornerstone TeleVision)—that had applied to swap licenses. After the swap, McCain supporter Lowell "Bud" Paxson planned to buy the public station's license for use by his family-friendly network (Pax TV). The commission consented to the swap and purchase, but 43 paragraphs into the routine ruling, it announced that henceforth 50 percent of all noncommercial religious programming must serve "an educational, instructional, or cultural purpose in the station's community of license"—and programming cannot qualify as "educational, instructional, or cultural" if it includes "religious exhortation, proselytizing, or statements of personally-held religious views or beliefs."

The commission was taking direct aim at that minority of religious broadcasters who operate under "educational" licenses, some 95 stations. According to the new rules, 50 percent of the programming on these noncommerical stations must be free of what is their stock in trade: church services, sermons, Bible study, prayer, and all manner of discussion by believers, including syndicated talk shows hosted by the likes of James Dobson and D. James Kennedy. The ruling goes on to insist that programs may explore religion in relation to science, technology, or culture; apply religious principles to real-life ethical dilemmas; probe the psychological effects of prayer; and even discuss religious texts from a historical viewpoint—so long as the purpose is not to convince listeners that religious teachings are true.

The commissioners express the hope that their decision will clarify the rules for noncommercial broadcasting. Plainly, it does the opposite. Even apart from First Amendment concerns, problems of interpretation loom. It's hard to imagine, for example, how one might apply biblical principles to ethical dilemmas without tipping one's hand as to whether one subscribes to the Ten Commandments.

Moreover, members of the board issued a flurry of separate dissents and concurrences that further cloud the regulations. Commissioner Susan Ness, in a concurring opinion marked by handwringing about "tread[ing] carefully to preserve . . . cherished objectives," wonders, for example, whether a "performance of Handel's *Messiah* [would] be primarily educational if it were performed at the Kennedy Center, but not primarily educational if it were performed in a church." The implication is that the FCC will be forced to consider not just the content but the context of tens of thousands of hours of religious programming.

The decision brings to an abrupt halt the FCC's years of fastidious refusal to base licensing decisions on programming content. The programming on noncommercial religious television channels, almost all of them run by evangelical Christians, has long been offensive to separation-of-church-and-state activists. Similarly, the airing of such programs as the documentary *It's Elementary*, advocating pro-gay indoctrination in grade schools, on public "educa-

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David Danz

tional" channels draws protests from evangelicals. But when the use of reserved federal channels for such purposes has been challenged, the FCC has consistently sided with the broadcasters on free-speech grounds.

For the same reason, the FCC heretofore has given broadcasters latitude in interpreting its rules. In fact, a good-faith clause protecting broadcasters' "reasonable judgment" is standard in FCC decisions. Order 99-393, however, adds a warning that broadcasters' judgments will be evaluated in "the overall context of the broadcast." Broadcasters, in short, may be liable for violating the spirit of the new regulations even if they live up to the letter.

Finally, as startling as the abruptness of the FCC's policy shift is the stealthy way it was accomplished. By issuing the new guidelines in an adjudicatory proceeding, the FCC avoided the hearings normally used to elicit public comment before broad regulatory changes are enacted. And the decision was released on December 29, 1999, when public attention was focused on the turn of the millennium and Y2K.

Despite the commissioners' reassurances—"discussion of religious matters during a program," they say, does not necessarily "disqualif[y] the program from being a 'general educational' program"—the vagueness of the regulations leaves many uneasy. Commissioners Harold Furchtgott-Roth and Michael Powell note in their dissent that the guidelines "invite unnecessary battles over the content of noncommercial programming." They provide groups like the American Civil Liberties Union the chance to tie up noncommercial licensing applications in drawn-out legal maneuvers, as lawyers parse programs for signs of proselytizing. Few noncommercial religious broadcasters can afford protracted legal battles, and many may decide not to take the risk.

Caught in the middle, the broadcasters face two equally unpalatable choices: secularizing their programs, and attempting to comply with vague regulations almost certain to yield lawsuits. No one knows, for instance, whether the new guidelines apply to future licensees or stations already in operation. The latter prospect has the National Religious Broadcasters Association itself mulling legal action.

With a year to go before a new president could reorient the Democrat-controlled FCC, the broadcasters' best hope lies in congressional action. On January 11, representative Michael Oxley (R-Ohio) unveiled legislation reversing Order 99-393 and requiring the FCC to use its normal rule-making procedures, with opportunity for public comment, should it seek to regulate in this area in the future. As of this writing the half-dozen co-sponsors include House majority leader Dick Armey and one Democrat, Ralph Hall of Texas.

Riding a wave of support from evangelicals, Oxley is undeterred by FCC chairman William Kennard's disingenuous protestation that the guidelines merely clarify existing policy. The FCC, for now, is standing firm. And why not? It has no constituency to please but the administration. ♦

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Lonely Eagle

Charles Lindbergh, his family, and his times.

By Noemie Emery

No man of the twentieth century is more of a paradox than its first major hero, Charles A. Lindbergh. The Prince of Wales-JFK of the late 1920s; the Pat Buchanan (some think) of the late 1930s; the tree-hugging Henry David Thoreau of the 1960s—Lindbergh was all of these, the most adored, and reviled, of men. He won his great fame in a stunt—his twenty-seven hour flight from New York to Paris in May 1927, the first solo flight across the Atlantic—and used it to fund a long and complicated life as a scientist and mystic, writer and man of action. He was widely attacked as a fascist and bigot, charges that would stun his five children, who had been raised by a father they knew as the essence of tolerance. A domineering and controlling husband, he was at the same time the most ardent of feminists, pushing his writer-wife into a career of her own and taking great pride in her work.

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Loathed (with some reason) by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who considered him close to a Nazi and a traitor, he was welcomed back to the White House by John and Jacqueline Kennedy (he shared an antiwar bond with Kennedy's father, whom he met in the U.S. embassy in London before World War II). An indefatigable man of science, who besides his aviation exploits helped make possible organ transplants with a pump he invented in the 1930s, Lindbergh late in life turned on this passion, spending his last years protecting virgin forests and primitive tribes.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh
Her Life
by Susan Hertog
Doubleday, 561 pp., $30

Under a Wing
A Memoir
by Reeve Lindbergh
Simon & Schuster, 223 pp., $23

Lindbergh
by A. Scott Berg
Berkley, 628 pp., $16 paper

A man so complex, in some ways unknowable, is perhaps better seen from a number of angles, and all the important ones are now at hand: the comprehensive biography by Scott Berg, now out in paperback; an empathetic new view of Lindbergh's wife, the writer Anne Morrow, by Susan Hertog; and the unique and wonderful *Under a Wing*, Reeve Lindbergh's memoir of life as the youngest of the Lindbergh children, growing up with two gifted parents and fame.

The paradox starts early in the story: The young man who landed in Paris wasn't just the apple-cheeked farm boy of press reports but the offspring of a line of eccentrics, people described by Berg as "prideful to the point of arrogance . . . so evangelical as to appear fanatical, so global in their vision as to be short-sighted . . . rebels so far apart from the rest of society as to be above the law." Lindbergh's paternal grandfather, Ole Månsson, a Swedish politician close to King Carl XV, emigrated to America and changed his name to Lindbergh to escape the con-

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sequences of bigamy and scandal. Lindbergh's father, Charles Sr., was a crusading populist congressman—later vilified and hanged in effigy for opposing entry into World War I. As a boy, young Charles sat with his father on the floor of Congress, dropped light bulbs from the top floor of the House Office Building, and went often to the Smithsonian Institution, whose Air and Space museum now houses his *Spirit of St. Louis*. He went there with his mother, Evangeline Land, a high-school teacher and child of a Detroit physician, a dissatisfied daughter of the middle prairie. She was chiefly dissatisfied with Lindbergh's father, and the marriage broke down when the boy was a toddler.

Lindbergh grew up moving back and forth between places and parents, close to and adored by both but aware of the discord between them. It was this experience of the complexities of social life, some suggest, that drove him to science: "The young Lindbergh," notes Hertog, "learned to value the clean-cut language of science and precise methodology of his physician grandfather . . . whose laboratory in Detroit provided him with a refuge from relations and controversies he could neither control nor understand." Science became his home and his refuge, his faith, and fount of his morality. "He came to believe that 'Science held the key to the mystery of life, science was truth, science was power.' With this key, he would later write, man 'could taste the wine of the Gods, of which they would know nothing.'"

Flying was his entree to the pure heart of science, bringing him close to mechanics and nature, the two worlds to which he best related. As his daughter Reeve explains, he didn't just fly, "he became the airplane." The small, flimsy planes, with their low range and exposed cockpits, their sweeping views of the clouds, and the landscape beneath them, gave unparalleled access to nature. He became the airplane, and he and the airplane became part of the sky. And in his planes, he dreamed: of better planes, faster planes, longer flights, of the kind of plane that could make the journey from New York to Paris, a flight for which Raymond Orteig, a French-born American, had offered a $25,000 prize. Three flights had failed, and two men had died in them, before Lindbergh took off from Roosevelt Field on Long Island, in a plane he had designed himself, with money he had raised himself, and whose construction he had lovingly

supervised. Lindbergh thought he was doing something grave and weighty; for science, for mankind, for history. The public had different ideas.

When the *Spirit of St. Louis* touched earth in Paris, it deposited its pilot not only in Europe, but in the burgeoning center of a celebrity culture that had been waiting for someone like him. The young man on a perilous quest—the Lone Eagle—is a signature theme of the human experience, touching a magical chord in all cultures, and in 1927 the techniques of modern communications had just reached the point at which the particular exploits of one special hero could unite the fantasies of men around the globe. "By that year," writes Berg, "radio, telephones, radiographs, and the Bartlane Cable Process could transmit images and voices around the world within seconds. . . . For the first time, all of civilization could share as one in the sights and sounds of an event—almost instantaneously and simultaneously. And in this unusually good-looking young aviator—of apparently impeccable character—the new technology found its first superstar."

In many ways, Lindbergh was right for the moment. In his courage, restraint, and amazing good looks he was the idealized image of a young American. "His flight symbolized the hope of the future," writes Hertog perceptively. "But it also captured a nostalgia for the past. His spartan simplicity mirrored an aspect of the collective past that Americans feared they were losing. The sandy-haired boy with his modest grin and borrowed suits . . . confirmed some sense of heartland integrity." A pioneer in the realm of scientific advancement, he also seemed, in the midst of the Jazz Age, a throwback to older values, a "dragon-slaying man of action, courage, and moral rectitude . . . a conquering prince." In the midst of sometimes unsettling progress, there could also appear reassurance: "Americans knew what they had gained even as they feared the price they were paying. Lindbergh told them that nothing had been lost."

Lindbergh then wed an American princess, Anne Spencer Morrow, daughter of Dwight Morrow, whose legal skills had lifted him from scholarly poverty, to a partnership in the firm of J.P. Morgan and Company, to an ambassadorship to Mexico (where Charles and Anne met), and a seat in the United States Senate. Two arms of the meritocracy were thus conjoined. The newlyweds flew round the world, charting new routes for air travel. Rich now for life, they planned joint careers of high purpose. They came home, and settled down in New Jersey, where a son was born to them. Seemingly the best that the country (and world) had to offer, they had all that the world had to give them. And it would quickly be taken away.

On March 1, 1932, Charles A. Lindbergh Jr. was taken from his second-floor nursery while his parents ate din-

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ner below. Weeks later, the murdered infant's body was discovered in a nearby ditch. Not until the assassination of Kennedy three decades later would the world be so stunned by one criminal act, so shocked by the way fate could turn on the fortunate. The Lindberghs, once famous for grace, gifts, and courage, now became famous for affliction and suffering. To this would soon be added fame of a still darker nature: the infamy of the quisling or dupe.

As a result of the crime, and the trial that followed—and threats against their second son, Jon, born five months after his brother was murdered—the Lindberghs sailed for England on December 21, 1935, seeking security they could no longer find in America. They managed to find peace for awhile—at Long Barn, the recently vacated home of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson. But the move put them in easy reach of the Continent, where Hitler was building the German armed forces—in particular, the air arm, the Luftwaffe. It was only natural that the American Embassy in Berlin would ask their country's ace pilot to come see and report on the Nazis' new air force, and the Lindberghs made their first trip to Germany in July 1936. More trips followed in the next three years, and with each, Lindbergh was impressed at how the German forces became stronger, and the French and British governments more effete and lethargic. By the time Charles and Anne returned to America in 1938, he had become convinced that Britain should seek a negotiated peace with Hitler as the only way to avoid being decisively beaten. Convinced also that American intervention would merely delay, at great cost, a German victory on the mainland of Europe, Lindbergh began to invest more and more of his effort in the antiwar America First movement.

The American antiwar movement of the 1930s, which Lindbergh began to lead almost immediately, had several faces. There were fascists and racists, who approved ethnic cleansing as practiced by Hitler; there were anti-Communists, who backed anyone whom they saw as a check on Stalin; there were pacifists, who objected to all use of force; and socialists, who objected to saving imperialist powers, considering the difference between England and France, on the one hand, and Germany and Italy, on the other, to be one of degree. There was Father Coughlin, the bigoted radio priest; there was Norman Thomas, the premier American socialist; University of Chicago chancellor Robert Maynard Hutchins; Chester Bowles, then an advertising executive; and Alice Roosevelt Longworth, whose main aim was annoying her fifth cousin, Franklin. Active in student chapters of America First were Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., who would die in the war in a suicide mission (but not brother John, whose hero was Churchill); future Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart; future Peace Corps head Sargent Shriver; future president of Yale Kingman Brewster; and future president of the United States Gerald Ford. Clearly, there were "better" and "worse" isolationists. The question about Lindbergh, which persists to this day, is to which group he belonged.

Berkley. Opposite: UPI / Corbis-Bettmann.

Above: Charles and Anne in the [illegible]. Opposite: The 1927 Transatlantic hero.

What did he think, and when did he think it? The son of a classic midwest isolationist, Lindbergh believed the First World War was a terrible error, which had helped to bring on the Second. As an airman, he was appalled at the damage that could be done to civilians by the new techniques of warfare: He did not shrink from war, but the bombing of women and children struck him as wholly uncivilized. He was neither opposed to democracy nor friendly to authoritarian systems, but when he looked at France and England, he was appalled at their weakness. He was not hostile to the Jews or the British, or unmoved by their suffering. He did not want to see France and Britain defeated by Germany; he had urged both to mobilize quickly and been disheartened and depressed when they had not. He did want Germany to defeat Russia, if it came to a battle: His great hope had been that Hitler and Stalin would busy themselves with each other, and leave Western Europe alone.

That said, there are good reasons why many people came to believe that the one-time paragon of American virtues had become a dangerous man. As a natural scientist—a Darwinian in his orientation, and not a lawyer or diplomat—Lindbergh believed aggres-

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sion was a fact of life. He thought it natural that one country should covet the land and the treasure of others. He was unreserved in his admiration for Germany's scientific advances. Mainly through stubbornness, he refused to return or disown a medal that Nazi Field Marshal Hermann Goering thrust on him, not understanding that, in the public mind, it bound him to Hitler's Germany. And he could not see how it was—though his anguished wife tried to explain it to him—that he had allied himself with anti-Semites when he said at an America First rally in Des Moines in September 1941 that American Jews, in calling for intervention, did not have America's interests at heart.

Reeve Lindbergh, born in 1945, was angry and heartsick, she writes, when "I first heard my father's voice on tape in his Des Moines speech, telling the world that one of the greatest dangers in pre-war America was the influence of Jews." But most of all, she was stunned. "How did such a person then raise children, who, by his instruction and example, day after day, year after year, learned [tolerance] from him? . . . He was not capable of the ethnic slurs or racial 'jokes' I heard occasionally at the homes of other suburban Connecticut children. . . . He would not have been able to laugh at the hopelessly ignorant jokes . . . in *All in the Family*. He would have been shocked." What Lindbergh said in fact was this:

> It is not difficult to understand why Jewish people desire the overthrow of Nazi Germany. The persecution they suffered . . . would be sufficient to make bitter enemies of any race. No person with a sense of the dignity of mankind can condone the persecution of the Jewish race in Germany. But no person of honesty and vision can look at their pro-war policy . . . without seeing the dangers involved. . . . I am not attacking either the Jewish or the British people. Both races I admire. But I am saying that the British and Jewish races, for reasons which are as understandable from their viewpoint as they are inadvisable from ours, for reasons which are not American, wish to involve us in the war.

Above: Lindbergh the America-Firster greeted at a Nazi reception in 1938. Below: Lindbergh the environmental activist in the Philippines in 1969.

Lindbergh thought he was helping the Jews, saving them from the backlash that would arise if "they" pushed the country into what he thought would be a bloody and futile war. What he did not sense—what his wife tried to tell him—was the danger of differentiating Jews from other Americans, of suggesting that "they" had interests that differed from "ours" and were "not American." This was not only incendiary at a time when anti-Semitism was one country's lethal national policy, but it was an affront to the core idea of American nationhood, which is of one country composed of differing peoples who profess a common civic creed. In this sense, it was Lindbergh who had interests that were "not American."

Lindbergh was not an anti-Semite, he only sounded like one, which in that time was sufficiently dangerous. But what really sounds sinister, in our time, is his obdurate focus on race. Where others saw clashes between good and evil, or Allied and Axis, he saw them between light and dark. Fights between England and Germany were "civil wars" in "our own family of nations," a "family" threatened by alien forces. These forces were non-whites (among whom he placed Russians) who did not share our ideas, or scientific proclivities. Ideally, France, England, and Germany should all be united, in a "Western wall of race and arms . . . against attack by foreign armies and dilution by foreign races" and "the infiltration of inferior blood." He was right to call the "Grecian inheritance of Europe" the prime human achievement, but wrong to think common bloodlines implied common values. That the greatest threat to civilization might come from the center of Europe, from a people scientifically advanced, culturally literate, and nominally Christian, was something he could not fathom.

In May 1945, Lindbergh was one of the first civilians to set foot inside conquered Germany, on a mission to seek information on Nazi rocketry programs, before the Russians could get to them first. In June, he reached the V-2 rocket factories in Nordhausen, attached to Camp Dora, a branch of the notorious Bergen-Belsen slave labor-extermination camp. There his guide, an ex-inmate, showed him the gas chambers, the crematoria, the piles of ashes, stopping once to pick up a human femur that had not been consumed in the flames. The sight of this

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hellhole cheek-by-jowl with a monument to modern technological progress shook Lindbergh to his marrow.

He had always supposed, he wrote later, that science *had* to go along with a certain level of civilized conduct: Part of his blindness about Hitler's Germany came from his belief that a people so advanced in science could not be that bad. In Camp Dora, he saw his mistake, and it changed him forever. Science, he saw, did not guarantee morals or wisdom; rather it needed morals and wisdom to restrain its potential for evil. "Power, to be successful, must be backed by morality," Lindbergh would write in the late 1940s. "If civilization is to continue, modern man must direct the material power of his science by the spiritual truths of his God." With his beliefs about science had gone his beliefs about race. These were not, after all, his civilized brethren. And if race—language, culture, bloodlines, religion—did not mean a standard of values, then what was race good for? The answer he reached was, not much. He never recanted what he had once said and written, but he spent much of his later life outside of Europe, immersed in the yellow, black, and brown peoples he had once thought a threat to his culture.

By 1963, he would tell his friend the philanthropist Harry Guggenheim:

> The idea of racial inferiority or superiority is foreign to me. I can't feel inferior or superior to another man because of race, or in any way antagonistic to him. I judge by the individual, not by his race, and have always done so. I would rather have one of my children marry into a good family of any race than into a bad family of any other race.

"I have always done so"—No, he had not always done so, but this was the man whom his children remembered. He had moved from one polar extreme to the other.

Having worked unstintingly for the American military throughout the Second World War, Lindbergh continued after the war his deep involvement in aviation and defense issues. He was present at the moon shot in July 1969, lauded by all for his contributions to air and space travel. But increasingly, he looked on science, and his branch of it, as a sinister element: "While missiles have opened to our knowledge unexplored reaches of space, they have made our civilization subject to extermination within hours." From the sky, Lindbergh could see man's encroachment on nature. He spent more and more time in primitive areas. He godfathered modern ecology movements. He read, quoted, and worshiped Thoreau. Youthful and lively into his seventies, he might still be among us, had he not fallen ill with lymphoma. His last flight took him to his home in Hawaii, where he supervised the digging of his grave and made plans for his funeral, concerned with drainage details at the gravesite, and insisting that his coffin's lining be biodegradable. He died on August 26, 1974, and was buried in hours, before the press could get to him—still the most private of all public men.

Anne and her youngest daughter, Reeve, summer 1948.

Doubleday. Opposite: Berkley.

But it's not as though his family had an easy time understanding him, either. The paradoxes carried over into Lindbergh's private life. The controlling patriarch married an ambitious woman and promoted her writing, convinced that she was a great talent. He took her into his world of adventure, and encouraged and nurtured her poetry. In some ways the perfect feminist husband, he gave her the much-longed-for Room of Her Own (he bought her a trailer) and insisted she work in it often. He ginned up commissions for her, pushed her out on assignments, and tried to protect her from household distractions. Their daughter Reeve describes invading her mother's workroom as a child, only to be escorted out by her father, who would instruct her, gently but firmly, that her mother was a Great Writer who must not be disturbed.

But living with Lindbergh was never too easy, and Anne's nerves were often scraped raw. His fame cost them their first child, and the scar of the trial. His antiwar work had put her on the rack. In choosing his course, he was true to his roots—his father's views were eerily similar—but Anne had been turned against hers. Her friends, her mother, her sister, and brother-in-law were all staunch interventionists. Even after the war, there was trouble in paradise: The union that endured through death, war, and

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Doubleday

Anne and Charles, summer 1969.

trial showed signs of stress during peace. For the first time, their lives broke off from one another: Charles went off on his various missions, while Anne stayed at home with their five growing children, feeling forlorn and deserted. At times, she was bitter. "C. is not going to change his pattern of being away from home most of the time," went a 1959 diary entry. "I must plan, as a widow, to augment my life." On the other hand, when home, he was almost too present, holding her up to his rigorous standards. His very faith in her—his belief that she was a great writer, who should be writing great books—made her defensive and broke down her self-confidence. According to both Berg and Hertog, Anne was often depressed and spent long hours crying. Reeve on the other hand recalls the unbroken conversation of years that went on between her two parents, the incessant sharing of values and concepts, the long working sessions, when, for hours and hours, they went over each other's books. Doubtless, both pictures are true.

"In kindergarten, one of my brothers told a friend on the playground that our father had discovered America," Reeve Lindbergh begins her memoir of her parents. "At about the same age, I dreamed that he was God." The man she describes does sound a great deal like the Old Testament deity: protective, all-knowing, loving, and stern. The youngest of the five children born after her brother was murdered, Reeve grew up with her siblings much as John Kennedy's children did, with parents of almost mythic dimension: famous for things they could barely, if at all, remember.

Never mentioned at home, the kidnapping remained a dark undertow, bringing them into touch with dementia. There would be calls and letters from men her sister Anne called the "young pretenders," who believed they were the lost Lindbergh boy. Now and then, strange young men would show up at their house and be met at the door by their father, who would walk them away slowly, with a hand on their shoulders, and an infinitely sad expression on his face.

Lindbergh's complexities were still more in evidence in his role as a parent. An affectionate father, he was unrelenting and rigorous. An attentive father, he was seldom home. "He was calmest in practical crisis, and grew restless during quiet periods," says Reeve, noting that he was at loose ends when there was no threat against which to shelter his family. Like many people who have lived with real dangers, he was exceedingly cautious in everyday matters, content to stay on beginners' runs on the ski slopes, checking his cars before routine errands, driving in the slow lane, being passed on all sides by hot-rodding drivers unaware that the codger in the Ford doing fifty-five was the daring Lone Eagle. Each day with him was a rigorous exercise, with small events tied to large issues. For his children, "There was a 'Freedom and Responsibility' lecture . . . an 'Instinct and Intellect' lecture . . . and a 'Downfall of Civilization' lecture, prompted by our father's encounters with air conditioning, television, politics, Pop Art." They were forbidden to celebrate holidays he deemed fraudulent, such as Mother's and Father's Days. As his daughter Anne would say later, "We never knew whether father was coming or going, and it didn't really matter, because whether he was there or not, he always made his presence felt."

In that, the children's feelings were those of their mother. Lindbergh's hypernatural qualities—his standards, his demands, his curiosity, his energy, his restlessness, his constant need to be learning and doing—began to exhaust them. When he left, there was a great relaxation—followed by very great emptiness. As Reeve writes, "He left behind a vast hole in our universe, as great as the death of a star."

Even Anne, who had planned earlier to "live as a widow" found that once she was one, she could barely function without this stubborn, inspiring, maddening man. She could always write, but he had given her the subjects—war, death, and ultimate pressure—that pushed her feminine prose into harder and more lasting metal.

With him gone, she stopped writing completely. "Without his 'rational' mind and his commanding presence, there was nothing for her to push against," maintains Susan Hertog. When Hertog visited Anne in 1987, the following exchanges took place: "I spoke of her books; Anne spoke of Charles. I spoke of her poetry; Anne spoke of Charles. I spoke of her father; Anne spoke of Charles." So, they talked about Charles. And people still do, and perhaps always will. ♦

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Sometimes a Magazine Is Just a Magazine

Renata Adler's memoir of life on the staff of the old New Yorker. **BY ANDREW FERGUSON**

When a writer's imagination fails him, and he runs out of things to write about, he often turns to writing about writing. This explains the large number of books that have been produced over the years about the *New Yorker* magazine, most of them by former contributors who have pretty much played out their string. Renata Adler's *Gone: The Last Days of* The New Yorker is the latest in a line stretching back at least to James Thurber's *The Years with Ross*, and including more recently the exquisitely bad *Here but Not Here*, by Lillian Ross, and *Remembering Mr. Shawn's* New Yorker, by Ved Mehta. The authors of such books, as a rule, are writers who contributed their best stuff to the magazine many years before they got around to writing about it, and so their memoirs serve merely as receptacles for ferocious resentments, remembered slights, bitter score-settling, and vigorously expressed nostalgia for the old days, back when, perforce, the *New Yorker* was a great magazine and they, the authors, were still writing stories worth reading.

Gone
The Last Days of The New Yorker
by Renata Adler
Simon & Schuster, 252 pp., $25

Andrew Ferguson is a senior editor at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

There are so many of these books, and their quality is generally so low, that the appearance of yet another one raises an obvious question: Who cares? That we should care—about the *New Yorker* magazine above all, and about the memoirists themselves, by virtue of their association with it—is an assumption grounded in what might be called "*New Yorker* exceptionalism," a dogma shared widely throughout entire neighborhoods of Manhattan and extending into parts of Brooklyn Heights. Renata Adler states the credo in its pure form: "For more than thirty years, the *New Yorker* was not only the finest magazine of its time but probably the finest English-language magazine of all time." There are magazines, according to *New Yorker* exceptionalism, and there are magazines—and then there's the *New Yorker*, off to one side, sui generis, towering above all others.

In some senses this is true: The *New Yorker* was a uniquely interesting magazine—a thing worth thinking about, as few things are in American journalism. If the *New Yorker* wasn't the "finest" magazine of all time, it was certainly the most eccentric, at least among publications intended to turn a profit. Many magazines try to prevent an undue influence by advertisers on editorial content, for example; at the *New Yorker* the rule was fetishized to the point where writers and editors were forbidden from even speaking with members of the business staff. Graphically its format remained essentially unchanged from its founding in 1925 to the early 1990s: It printed no photographs, and advertisements could run only in vertical columns, since a horizontal layout across the page would interfere with the flow of copy and might thereby, through some mystical process, corrupt the prose.

The magazine declined to print letters to the editor, or a masthead, or headlines on the cover that might entice a reader to look inside. Its table of contents was hermetically uninformative, omitting even the name of the writer of an article. (The writer's name would appear only at the end of the piece.) It maintained a scrupulous indifference to the topical; "We don't want scoops," the editor William Shawn would tell his reporters. These conventions were the *New Yorker*'s alone, giving it over the years the musty odor of an ancient sanctuary, unsullied by commerce, sealed off from the vulgarities of fashion and celebrity.

Renata Adler worked for the magazine, starting in the early 1960s and staying there for thirty years. In her book she demonstrates that the *New Yorker*'s eccentricities were a personal reflection of Shawn, who served as its editor from 1952 to 1987. Founded as a light and frothy "comic weekly" by Harold Ross, the *New Yorker* under Shawn enlarged its scope to include modernist fiction, experimental poetry, and long, definitive, gracefully written, exhaustive, long, long reporting pieces on every conceivable subject, from pesticide use to nuclear disarmament to horse racing. These nonfiction articles—did I mention they were long?—became, fairly or unfairly, the *New Yorker*'s signature during the years when Adler supposes it was the finest magazine ever. The stories were often so tediously detailed that a word was coined to describe Shawn's editorial personality: "unboreable."

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Adler writes that in private and in person, along the hushed corridors of the *New Yorker*'s offices, and among the assembled neurotics who staffed the magazine, Shawn was even stranger still. She opens her book with an attack on Lillian Ross's *Here But Not Here*, which purported to be a tribute to Shawn. In fact, Adler says, Ross's book was "an astonishing and fierce, unremitting, though apparently inadvertent, attack on Mr. Shawn, his magazine, and virtually everything he stood for and believed."

She now hopes to set the record straight, but it must be said that even by Adler's own account, Shawn comes off as worse than an eccentric: This is one sick little copy jockey. Quite beyond his personal idiosyncrasies—he never owned a color television, for instance, on the suspicion that the color in the tube would give him cancer—Adler's version of William Shawn shows him to be untruthful, narcissistic, ruthless, delusional. In the many conversations she recounts verbatim, he refers bizarrely to a mysterious and nameless "they" who prevent him from pursuing one or another course of action. At such moments he sounds less like the world's greatest magazine editor than the night clerk at the Bates Motel.

And yet—surely—he must have been a kind of genius, given his magazine's contributions to American journalism. Right? Renata Adler isn't so sure. Simply by being such a gifted and discerning editor, Shawn and his *New Yorker* killed off the "little magazines" in which young writers develop their talents. "When he did buy material from young or unknown writers," Adler writes, "then delayed publication for months, even years, the morale and then the work of those writers declined. It is impossible to know how much promising work the magazine obliterated in this way. Probably a lot." Far from enriching the world of American letters, in other words, the editor drained it of promising talent. Thanks for nothing, Mr. Shawn.

This is a strange argument, to say the least, as though Adler were straining to conjure up the most damning criticism she can make of her former mentor, regardless of its plausibility. And it is then that the reader begins to see that Adler's harsh attack on Lillian Ross's book is in fact an almost clinical example of what the headshrinkers call "transference," and that her ostensible tribute to this large figure, William Shawn, is an almost hysterical repudiation of him, which suggests . . . and it is *then* that the reader realizes he is caught in a psychodrama that reveals much, much more about these people than he ever, under any circumstances, wanted to know. *Gone* is a hard book to finish.

The *New Yorker*, in any case, was never quite as exceptional as the exceptionalists believed. The stable of writers who chose to publish there almost exclusively—Thurber, A.J. Liebling, Joseph Mitchell, E.B. White, Janet Flanner—is very impressive, and probably without parallel, and certainly a testament to some great gift of William Shawn's. But still: As a journalistic enterprise—especially in the time Adler writes about, the 1960s and the 1970s—its best never surpassed the best of *Esquire*, for example; and the sum of its contributions to American fiction isn't any more significant than those of, say, the *American Mercury* or *Collier's* or the *Saturday Evening Post*. Adler, though, wants us not only to accept the exceptionalist premise but also to believe that the magazine, since Shawn's departure, has become irredeemably debased. Why, she notes in horror, it even runs horizontal ads these days, interfering with the flow of prose! And so it does. My most recent copy shows a couple of horizontal ads. And guess what? It's still a good magazine—which is what it always was. That, and only that. ♦

Rock-A-Bye Stalin

Communism stages a comeback in Hollywood.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The world of the theater has ever been the source of great and wacky backstage stories, and one of the greatest and wackiest came about in 1937, when a twenty-two-year-old impresario named Orson Welles marched several thousand people waiting to see the premiere of a new musical twenty-one blocks uptown from a padlocked New York City theater to a dumpy venue off Central Park where a lone man sat on stage in front of an upright piano. There were no sets, no actors, nothing but Marc Blitzstein, the author of the book, music, and lyrics for a musical called *The Cradle Will Rock*, which he was going to have to perform entirely by himself.

John Podhoretz is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD *and a columnist for the* New York Post.

Welles was the director of the piece, though in being so he was working as an employee of the federal government. During the New Deal, the Works Progress Administration—FDR's grandiloquent effort to offer direct employment to out-of-work Americans—had set up an organization called the Federal Theater Project as a relief program for stage professionals like Welles (who, like 40,000 other artisans, received the grand sum of $23.86 a week for his labors). But by June 1937, the free-spending WPA was being reined in by Congress, and Welles and his fellow WPA arts honchos received a memo from Washington informing them that they could not open "any new play, musical performance or art exhibit" for a few weeks.

This was deemed an intolerable act of artistic suppression by Welles and his

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producer, John Houseman (the same John Houseman who would years later tell the world that the investment firm of Smith Barney makes "money the old-fashioned way, they *earn* it"). Both men insisted *The Cradle Will Rock* would have its opening night five days later as scheduled. Within forty-eight hours, as Houseman told it four decades afterwards, "a dozen uniformed WPA security guards invaded our theater. They occupied the box office and the front of the house, also backstage and the dressing rooms to make sure that no federal property was used or removed. This covered scenery, musical scores and costumes, including our actors' underwear and our leading man's toupee." The cast and crew retreated from the guards they called "the Cossacks" to a velour-lined honey trap in the theater that had been used as a trysting spot by J.P. Morgan and his favorite actress, there to figure out how to stage the show.

Touchstone Pictures

Macfadyen as Orson Welles, Azaria as Marc Blitzstein, and Elwes as John Houseman.

Houseman ruefully recalled later: "We were so busy asserting our integrity that we hadn't given much thought to the problems of performance." Which is to say, sets or no sets, costumes or no costumes, the actors and musicians were not allowed to perform the piece at all, because of restrictive union rules. That left only Blitzstein—and there wasn't even a piano for him to play on, not to mention a theater in which to put the show up. Houseman sent out a member of his staff with $5 and instructions to find a spinet, get it on a truck, and drive the thing around until they located a house, which they did, around 8:00 on a hot evening.

Then Welles and Houseman commenced the parade uptown to the new theater, in which a rollicking time was had by all. By the time they reached the Venice Theater, they were 2,500 strong. The audience was seated. Blitzstein began by speaking the words "Scene One" and commencing the first song, a ballad sung by a prostitute. "Then," Houseman said, "a most amazing thing happened. Within a few seconds, Marc Blitzstein became aware that he was not singing alone." Glassy-eyed with fear, the actress who was to play the part, Olive Stanton, began singing it from the audience. The man running the hand-held spotlight found her in the balcony. Her bravery in the face of possible sanctions from her union emboldened the rest of the cast, also in the audience, to rise and play their parts from their seats.

By the time the evening was over, the story was on the front page of five of the city's eleven newspapers, and a legend was born. It's an amazing tale, and a great movie could be made of it. Indeed, in the years of his sad final decline, Orson Welles wrote a delightful autobiographical screenplay about the whole business and cast the British actor Rupert Everett (later Julia Roberts's gay buddy in *My Best Friend's Wedding*) as himself before the funding fell through and Welles died in 1985. Now, the actor-writer-director Tim Robbins has made a film about it, called *Cradle Will Rock* (no "the"), and it's a disgrace.

What Robbins has done is take this story and make it the core of a Stalinist pageant in which capitalist bosses and radical right-wing politicians, working in cahoots with Mussolini and Hitler, use their power and influence to destroy a revolutionary artistic workers' movement. In doing so, he offers a conscious parallel to the incredibly crude plot of Blitzstein's *The Cradle Will Rock*, which depicts the downtrodden condition of the proletariat living in a city called Steeltown, U.S.A., run by a capitalist dog named Mr. Mister—he controls the newspapers, the police force, and even the prostitution rackets—who is finally laid low by a workers' uprising.

Blitzstein called it a "labor opera that falls somewhere between realism, romance, satire, vaudeville, comic strip, Gilbert and Sullivan, Brecht and Weill and agitprop." Only the last word is true. When Welles sat down to write his screenplay in 1983 and listened anew to the score, he realized it was so awful that he would have to work around it—offer as little of Blitzstein's work as he could while depicting the backstage shenanigans. The same is true of Robbins's film, which mercifully spares us more than a few snippets; he even blames the tunelessness of the first number on the fact that the actress who performs it, Emily Watson, can't sing on key.

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If you wanted to be kind, you could call Blitzstein's play a period piece, which is the thing you say when an artwork from the past seems absolutely horrific in the present—tuneless, witless, ham-handed, unfunny, and didactic. But there's really no reason to be kind to *The Cradle Will Rock*, because it is agitprop of a very specific and repulsive kind—the Stalinist kind. Blitzstein said he "specifically conceived" *The Cradle Will Rock* "as a Marxist work that addressed itself to the bourgeoisie." Blitzstein was an unregenerate Stalinist, a slavish follower of the man whose ideology resulted in the murder of more people in the history of the world than any other. In the movie, Blitzstein (played by the usually amusing Hank Azaria, who's totally charmless here) says he's not "officially" a member of the Communist party because his homosexuality made that impossible. That's a lie; Blitzstein was indeed a party member, as were many homosexuals, including Whittaker Chambers. Indeed, he was a cultural commissar of sorts, writing in the pages of the *Daily Worker* about the acceptable or unacceptable content of the work of others.

Blitzstein's Stalinism was so dogmatic that his "labor opera" supported only one kind of union—the kind that belonged to the Communist-dominated Congress of Industrial Organizations. The show ended with the raised fist that was the symbol of the CIO. One of the reasons that the actors' and musicians' unions refused to allow their members to perform in *The Cradle Will Rock* was that they were part of the non-Communist-dominated American Federation of Labor, then waging vicious battles with the CIO to keep the American labor movement from becoming part of an effort to seek a violent revolution in the United States. As Houseman notes in his memoir, *Run-Through*, "the final fatal blow had been dealt [Blitzstein] by those very unions in whose defense the piece had been written."

That irony is lost on Robbins, as is the fact that *The Cradle Will Rock* received such an ecstatic reception from the Federal Theater Project *because* of its Stalinism. As Hallie Flanagan, who ran the Federal Theater Project, put it in her memoir, "This was not just a play set to music, nor music illustrated by actors, but something new and better than either." In the movie, Robbins has Flanagan say, "Never before, to my knowledge, has an American musical dealt with content, social issues, dramatic themes. You're reinventing musical theater."

This is preposterous. Flanagan's speech supposedly takes place nine years after the premiere of Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein's *Show Boat*, a major American musical that dealt with racial prejudice, and two years after the premiere of George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. Those were "something new

and better" that "dealt with content, social issues, dramatic themes"—"reinventing musical theater." The only thing that made *The Cradle Will Rock* "new and better" was its Stalinism.

Which proves that, like many other works undertaken by the Federal Theater Project, *The Cradle Will Rock* was an affirmative-action show—given special attention, respect, and care not because of the content of its character, but because of the color of its politics. Robbins depicts another controversial Federal Theater Project undertaking, a children's show called *Revolt of the Beavers*, and makes fun of the criticism it came under for attempting to indoctrinate children into the precepts of Communist ideology. But *Revolt of the Beavers* did exactly that, and the usually mild-mannered Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times* complained at the time that "many children unschooled in the technique of revolution now have an opportunity, at government expense, to improve their tender minds. Mother Goose is no longer a rhymed escapist. She has been studying Marx; Jack and Jill lead the class revolution." Hallie Flanagan, who in the movie contemptuously insists the show is only about beavers, in fact had to cancel *Revolt of the Beavers* to deal with the outrage.

Robbins calls his *Cradle Will Rock* "a (mostly) true story," but it isn't. Though the movie takes place between fall 1936 and spring 1937, Robbins mixes in two other events of the 1930s and makes them seem contemporaneous—the commissioning and destruction of a mural by the artist Diego Rivera in the lobby of the new Rockefeller Center in 1934 and Flanagan's 1938 appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee. Robbins makes it appear as though the pressure brought to bear on Flanagan by HUAC was responsible for the padlocking of *The Cradle Will Rock*, but that too is a lie—it was the very progressive WPA itself, watching out for its cash flow in classic Washington fashion, that sent "the Cossacks" in to ensure the show would not be performed during a budget controversy.

Robbins does, however, get right one of the low-comedy moments in the history of HUAC. At one point in her testimony, Flanagan (played superbly by the great stage actress Cherry Jones) is asked by Rep. Joseph Starnes to defend something she had said about Christopher Marlowe. "This Marlowe," Starnes asks, "is he a Communist?" Flanagan explains that Marlowe "was the greatest dramatist in the period immediately preceding Shakespeare." Undaunted by his own illiteracy, Starnes pressed on: "Of course we had what some people call Communists back in the days of the Greek theater, and I believe Mr. Euripides was guilty of teaching class consciousness also, wasn't he?"

This exchange is straight out of the Congressional Record of 1938, and it reveals both the dangers and the occa-

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Touchstone Pictures. Opposite: State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

Above: The Hollywood version of Marc Blitzstein's 1937 triumph. Opposite: The real Orson Welles and John Houseman at the time.

sional hilarities when philistine politicians attempt to address issues of art. Nonetheless, after six months of hearings, HUAC spoke the truth when it reported to the House of Representatives that "we are convinced that a rather large number of the employees on the Federal Theater Project are either members of the Communist party or sympathetic to the Communist party." It's important to understand what that employment meant—it meant that U.S. taxpayers were paying the salaries of a significant number of people who advocated the violent overthrow of the United States government and the installation of a Stalinist tyranny. Such views were not illegal, but neither did they require a direct subsidy from Washington. In 1939, by a House vote of 373 to 21, the funding for the project was cut to the last cent.

Did *The Cradle Will Rock* play a part in that funding cut? One certainly hopes so.

Tim Robbins's movie shows its own, truly Stalinist intentions in the ridiculously overdrawn depiction of the scandal surrounding Diego Rivera (Rubén Blades) and his aborted mural for the lobby of Rockefeller Center. Robbins, following the standard myth, portrays its destruction as an act of cultural desecration more horrifying in its way than the padlocking of *Cradle*. This is the moment in the film when capitalism really shows its vicious power in the seemingly benign person of the young Nelson Rockefeller (John Cusack), who is (an opening title assures us) making billions selling goods to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. But again, the true story is more complicated, interesting, and flavored than that.

What Rivera decided to do was add a glorified portrait of Lenin to the mural. In his sympathetic and intelligent critical study of Rivera, Pete Hamill writes, "Rivera's defiant exercise in Communist idealism came up against one huge legal problem. The insertion of Lenin into his mural was an alteration of the original plan; Lenin does not appear anywhere in the approved sketch. In addition, there was a practical consideration that was more important than the narrow language of contracts: The Rockefellers were anxious to rent offices in a new seventy-story building in the middle of the Depression. It was unlikely that capitalist tenants would be happy to arrive each morning if forced to gaze at the face of Lenin. To insist on the inclusion of Lenin was absurd, even adolescent."

More to the point, as Hamill says flatly, "the unfinished mural was almost as bad as its title," which was "Man at the Crossroads Looking with Hope and High Vision to the Choosing of a New and Better Future." Hamill concludes that in Rivera's case, "the propagandist overwhelmed the artist, as he seemed more interested in currying favor with various Communist critics than in making an enduring work of art."

At the end of the movie, Rockefeller receives counsel from William Randolph Hearst: "We control the future of art because we will pay for the future of art. Appoint people to your museum boards that detest the Riveras of the world. Celebrate the Matisses. Create the next wave of art. . . . Celebrate color. Celebrate form."

So, in the world according to Tim Robbins, modernism and abstract expressionism were foisted on an unsuspecting world by moneybags like Rockefeller to prevent realistic, revolutionary art from bringing about the Revolution. That is Stalinism, pure and simple—for it was the Stalinists who believed that the only real art is Socialist Realism and that abstraction of any kind was counterrevolutionary.

Here we have it. Ten years after the fall of the Wall, eight years after the statues of Lenin were pulled down, a Hollywood studio has made the first neo-Stalinist epic just in time for the new millennium.

Happily, the movie stinks. ♦

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Not a Parody

For Working Parents, Homework by Fax

To the Editor:

As a working parent with long hours plus travel, I found Lisa Belkin's Jan. 5 Life's Work column, "At Home, Even if Only From Afar," to be both on point and poignant.

She writes about "the homework plan," in which her child faxes his homework to her when she is traveling and she faxes her suggestions back.

But why is it that the working parent who is the road warrior that day is the parent in charge of finding a fax machine to review her child's homework while in transit, when the other working parent's long hours at work (albeit late arrival home) probably mean easier access to his fax machine when he takes a two-minute break at work to refill his coffee cup?

The drill at our house for our 8-year-old daughter, Michelle Annalise, is: First ask the babysitter for help; if that fails, try Mom's fax if she's not traveling to close a deal; if that fails, try Dad's fax if he's not in court, and if all of the above fail, call Grandma Ro. (No fax available.)

Kandy Littrell

VALERIE A. MOLINARO
Great Neck, N.Y., Jan. 5, 2000

the weekly Standard
JANUARY 24, 2000

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Tightening the Screws in Russia

John B. Dunlop is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution.

Vladimir Putin, Russia's acting president, will likely be chosen the country's second president in elections to be held on March 26. This is not good news for the Western democracies. What can we expect from a Putin presidency, which, if he decides to ignore term limits, could extend twenty-five years or more, longer than Stalin's reign?

The parliamentary elections held in December showed that Russia has slipped down a notch from an "electoral democracy"—it never achieved the status of a "liberal democracy"—to a "pseudodemocracy," in which the ruling regime skews the rules of the game and vitiates the possibility of reasonably honest election results. Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan are other examples of pseudodemocracies.

In the recent parliamentary elections, state television functioned as an instrument of proregime propaganda and as an attack dog to savage candidates viewed as dangerous to the country's leadership (especially the Yevgenii Primakov–Yurii Luzhkov alliance and the Yabloko bloc). Boosted up by the regime were General Sergei Shoigu's Unity bloc, the Union of Right Forces, and the Zhirinovskii bloc. All three ardently supported the war in Chechnya.

As the noted former Soviet dissident Sergei Grigoryants has recently observed, "A strong state administered by a strong KGB has always been the goal of that organization." Vladimir Putin embodies the traditional strivings of that organization. His biography offers noteworthy parallels to that of the late Yurii Andropov, who chaired the USSR KGB for fifteen years and, before being felled by illness, became party general secretary. Andropov served from 1953 to 1957 as ambassador to Hungary and was for ten years party secretary for relations with socialist states. Putin, for his part, spent fifteen years (1975–1990) in East Germany running operations against West Germany and also monitoring the loyalty of Soviet troops based there.

Domestically, a "tightening of the screws," as Russians are wont to term it, is already under way. The Russian Secret Police (FSB) in late December assumed de facto control over the entire telephone system of the country. The Russian Ministry of Communications has announced that it wants to authorize (or not authorize) the opening of all new sites on the Internet. An Orwellian world in which the regime seeks to monitor and control telephone, fax, and Internet communications is emerging.

In foreign affairs, a Putin regime can be expected to push vigorously for the reintegration of what Putin terms "post-Soviet space." The formal conjoining of Russia and Belarus into a new "union state" is under way, with Putin's strong backing. Using the shibboleths of a struggle against Islamic terrorism and the alleged mistreatment of the "Russian diaspora," as well as subversion, Putin can be expected to put harsh pressure on all former Soviet republics, especially the states of the South Caucasus and Central Asia, with their oil and gas riches and key pipeline routes, to join his new union state.

As was the case with Andropov's general secretaryship, a Putin presidency will serve to keep the West very much on its toes.

— John B. Dunlop

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